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# **Spanish Missions of Texas**



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# Spanish Missions of Texas

by **Walter F. McCaleb**

THE NAYLOR COMPANY  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

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## Foreword

The period of the development of the missions in Texas needs much scientific study. The director of a recent motion picture on the Alamo has been quoted as saying, "It is amazing how much legend and how little historical fact is known about this mission." The same comment might be made about every one of the Texas missions.

If profound scientific historical studies are still in the future we are nonetheless fortunate in the readable and accurate introduction to the history of the Texas missions given us by Walter F. McCaleb. The dedication of this writer to what can only be called a golden period in the history of colonial effort should inspire other students of history to take up the task for each individual mission. The present volume gives sufficient data concerning the birth of Texas to whet the appetite for more.

Colonizing England seems never to have thought of using religious missionaries as an instrument of civilization. It has been charged that there was never question of such development of peoples but only of lands and resources taken from them. "The only good Indian is a dead Indian," is

a slogan we all remember from our study of the original Thirteen Colonies.

The original French explorers all seem to have had missionaries in their parties. Not a few of these missionaries led the exploration of new lands. The names of Pere Jean de Breboeuf and Pere Marquette and many others come to mind. What becomes clear in reading their exploits is that by and large they had to depend on their own resources. The French Government seemed to permit religious activities rather than to make use of them.

Our Texas missions are the constant evidence of a different policy on the part of the Spaniards. The Spanish venture was a three-pronged expedition. The military arm was charged with protection of the physical safety of the party. The civil prefect and his party provided for civil order and government. Perhaps this arm was also meant to ensure the regular transmission of profits to the Crown. In the case of the Texas missions there were never any profits such as there had been through the discovery of fabulous riches in parts of Central and South America.

The actual work of taming the savage as well as converting him was always entrusted to the missionaries. They had to bring in domestic animals, to teach cultivation and processing of raw materials, to make the benefits of civilization real to the children of forest and plain.

It is plain that this great tripartite effort had little success north of the Rio Grande. A measure of what was accomplished in Central and South America may be inferred from the simple fact that while the North American Indians number less than a half million today Mexico alone has a population of more than thirty-two million.

**"The Spanish Missions of Texas" was my own introduction to this period of Texas History. Its stimulating pages**

have done much to enable this latecomer to the Texas scene to comprehend something of the majesty of Texas' beginnings. It is to be hoped that many others may come to bear similar testimony to its excellence.

MOST REV. STEPHEN A. LEVEN  
Curator of Old Missions in  
Archdiocese of San Antonio





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## Author's Preface—To the Revised Edition

When asked by my publisher to revise *The Spanish Missions of Texas* for a new edition, I at once undertook to re-survey the field which I first began to explore in 1892. I was astonished to find that little in the way of new materials had been uncovered.

It is to be regretted that recent scholars are failing to deal with the original sources where lie the facts underwriting Texas history. This is not surprising, for it is tedious and dusty work to dig into papers musty with age. Another deterrent has undoubtedly been a lack of complete command of the Spanish language.

This revised edition, therefore, presents few new facts. It is still essentially a book written largely out of records to be found in the Bexar Archives. This writer was the first to consult them when they were still located in a cell in the County Court House in San Antonio, Texas. They are now the property of the University of Texas. This collection of documents contains much of the correspondence of the period of both Church and State.

Other data for this book came out of the *Archivo General de Mexico* which is a storehouse for the student of the early history of Texas.

The researches of Herbert E. Bolton and Carlos E. Castañeda in the field under consideration are important and exhaustive, and have not been superseded by any more

recent works. Particular emphasis must be laid on the labor of the latter in his monumental *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*. Grateful acknowledgment is made of the usefulness of his work in this narrative.

I am more than grateful to the late Carlos E. Castañeda for his Introduction and to Aurora McCaleb Pitkin for her Essay on St. Francis.

The edition here presented is designed for a popular audience. Those interested in pursuing the subject will find a Bibliography appended.

The more than a century covered by the Mission Period is for the most part all there is of the early history of Texas. The comings and goings of the Franciscans from end to end of the Province make up the outline of the story. The political conditions, the clash with the French on the Louisiana-Texas frontier, the wars with the Indians — all are reflected in the chronicles of the friars who laid the foundations for the present great structure of the state. This period is almost invariably glossed over, dismissed in most Texas histories with a few brief sentences.

And yet it is a period of great importance. Our inheritance out of it is to be seen in the incorporation of a great many words of the language into our language; in the names of regions and rivers and towns; in the shaping of many of our laws such as those dealing with property and water rights. Indeed, this early period may be said to have colored our thinking on many matters, a coloring we ourselves may too easily overlook. The picture marks plainly a continuation of the culture of Spain, which has about it many of the virtues that go to enhance modern life.

In conclusion, it gives me great pleasure to thank their Excellencies, Bishop Leven of San Antonio and Bishop Reicher of Austin, for their splendid letters of commendation.

W. F. M.

Austin, Texas  
July, 1960



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## Introduction

Among the most heroic pages in the history of the spread of Christian culture in the New World stands the record of the missionary efforts in unknown Texas. The land where the survivors of the Narváez expedition spent four years as slaves of Indians — before they escaped under the leadership of Cabeza de Vaca to make their way through a trackless continent back to Mexico — offered little inducement to subsequent ambitious conquistadors and adventurers. Neither Cabeza de Vaca nor Coronado, who penetrated the great plains shortly afterward, nor De Soto, who journeyed from the Sabine to the upper waters of the Brazos, found gold or glory for their pains. Years — nay, nearly a century — passed before interest again was aroused in the almost forgotten land, which was barren of great kingdoms and fabulous wealth.

The unexpected hour came, however, like a voice from the wilderness, calling for missionaries. One hot day in July, 1629, a strange delegation of Jumanos from the heart of Texas trudged their way to San Antonio de la Isleta in New Mexico to ask in the name of a mysterious Woman in Blue for instruction in the Faith and in the ways of Christian life. The sons of the incomparable Saint Francis of



Assisi — who loved all things because God created them and to whom a soul saved from the darkness of ignorance was more precious than gold, jewels or worldly kingdoms — knew not a day of rest until that call was answered. For years the appeal of the mysterious Woman in Blue haunted them in their sleeping and their waking hours. The desire to visit the distant land and carry to the natives the comforts of religion became an obsession. In vain they tried on various occasions to penetrate the land from New Mexico. The hour was not yet come.

That the Franciscan missionaries of New Mexico should have had this unquenchable desire is not strange. The ardent love of Saint Francis had found place in the heart of Pedro de Gante and his successors in Mexico, who went to the remotest corners of New Spain in search of souls to save, spreading civilization and Christian culture wherever they went. They founded schools as well as hospitals, preaching to men of good will. But the land of Texas still remained unexplored and unoccupied. Spanish expeditions had penetrated its borders in the early years after the Conquest; stragglers and shipwrecked hands wandered through parts of it, but no formal occupation had followed.

Yet ever since the Jumanos visited the custodian of the Franciscan missions in New Mexico at Isleta, the desire of Franciscan missionaries to enter the land had remained constant. Their prayers for means to go to the thousands of natives who awaited them finally were answered.

How was the desired dream fulfilled? What was the occasion that combined the religious fervor of the devoted sons of Saint Francis and the mundane considerations of the officials in New Spain to make possible the occupation of Texas? These two basic questions in the beginnings of Texas are here answered and explained from the records which glow with the fire of achievement under the simple and eloquent account now presented in synthesis. What becomes more amazing is that a large part of the story told here is

found in the Bexar Archives now in Austin, presented to The University of Texas at the turn of the century by Bexar County authorities. This unsuspected treasure of deeds of daring and valor unsurpassed in the annals of Spanish colonization tells the story of how civilization was brought to the natives of Texas, often at the sacrifice of life itself. The story thrills with the adventures of the Spirit. These records have been in our midst, but few men have quenched their thirst for knowledge of the past or refreshed themselves in this fountain of inspiration.

When news of the French settlement of La Salle on the Texas coast reached the viceroy in Mexico and a frantic search for the intruders was instituted, the Franciscan missionaries were ready to accompany the military and establish permanent missions as outposts of civilization and also to help the natives, to teach them, to win their confidence and loyalty. In the record here presented we have the whole story of the early attempts and the ultimate permanent occupation of East Texas, the Gulf Coast region, and the San Antonio area; the unsuccessful missions on the San Gabriel, the San Saba, the Trinity and the Nueces rivers; and the last outburst of the missionary fervor at Refugio, near the mouth of the San Antonio River.

The missionary endeavors of the Franciscans in Texas are wound inextricably with the civil settlement and the establishment of military outposts in this distant province. The story of the missions that failed and of those that succeeded at the cost of many sacrifices is more than that of the unselfish urge of the Spirit. It is part and parcel of the early history of the state. Again and again, when viceroys in Mexico and governors in Texas were inclined to abandon the enterprise, it was the Franciscans who never lost faith in the future of Texas. It was the missionaries, inspired by a consuming love that knew no bounds, who could not tear themselves away, could not bring themselves to abandon the wretched, ignorant and idolatrous natives. It was they

who persevered against indolence, indifference, perfidy and ingratitude to maintain the missions and induce Spanish officials to continue their efforts in Texas.

It is not a coincidence that they named their first establishment San Francisco de los Tejas. Their heart, like that of the humble Saint Francis of Assisi, had been with the poor and the neglected, the Indians of far-away Texas ever since they first heard rumors of the great kingdom of the Tejas from the Jumano delegation that came to San Antonio de la Isleta in New Mexico in 1629 to solicit missionaries. Their second mission, established in the midst of the virgin woods of the remote borders of Texas, was named Santa María, for had it not been the Woman in Blue who had asked the Jumanos to seek missionaries and sent them to the Franciscans?

The entrancing story of the unsung heroes of Christian culture in Texas is unfolded here with sympathy, not with sentimentality. Men like Frays Damian Massanet, Felix de Espinosa, Francisco de Jesús María, Antonio Margil de Jesús, San Buenaventura Olivares, Miguel Pinilla, Giraldo de Terreros, Santiesteban and dozens of others become human beings — men of flesh and blood, who stood up fearlessly before governors, captains and soldiers alike to chide them for their shortcomings and demand that they respect the rights of the Indians and be ruled in their actions by love of God and His children. The smoldering ruins of the San Sabá mission and the headless bodies of Frays Giraldo and Santiesteban eloquently speak of their willingness to pay the last measure of devotion to the cause of redemption and civilization. Fray Jesús María years before had died a martyr to initiate the work in East Texas — starved, sick, worn out by his great labor of love and his burning spirit of charity.

The whole story of Texas to the end of the eighteenth century, in synthesis, has been gathered from the numerous records — civil and religious; as well as from books, pamphlets and other sources — and put together into a connected

narrative within the short compass of this small volume. A veteran historian and writer has joined his mature and critical scholarship to the fresh outlook of his young collaborator to present a picture that is accurate and all-embracing, vivid as the dramatic subject depicted, analytical as experienced judgment can make it, impartial and understanding as a critical historian would like it and, withal, readable, human and understandable to all who still marvel before the heroic endeavors and the incredible sacrifices of the pioneer blazers of civilization in Texas.

— CARLOS E. CASTAÑEDA, K. H. S.  
Knight Commander Order of Isabel  
the Catholic





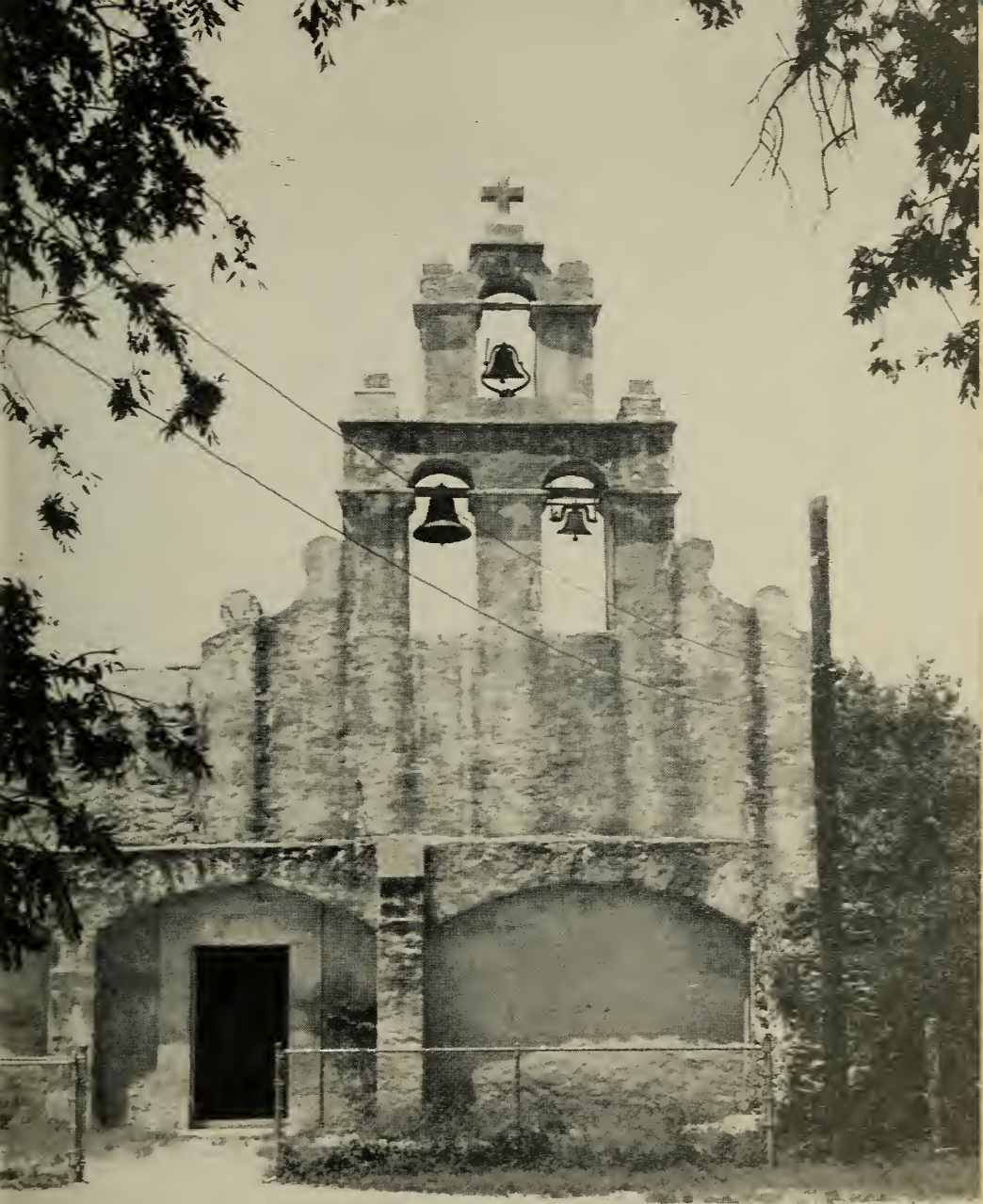


Mission La Purísima Concepción de Acuña, founded in East Texas in 1716 and moved to San Antonio in 1731, was nearest to the town.



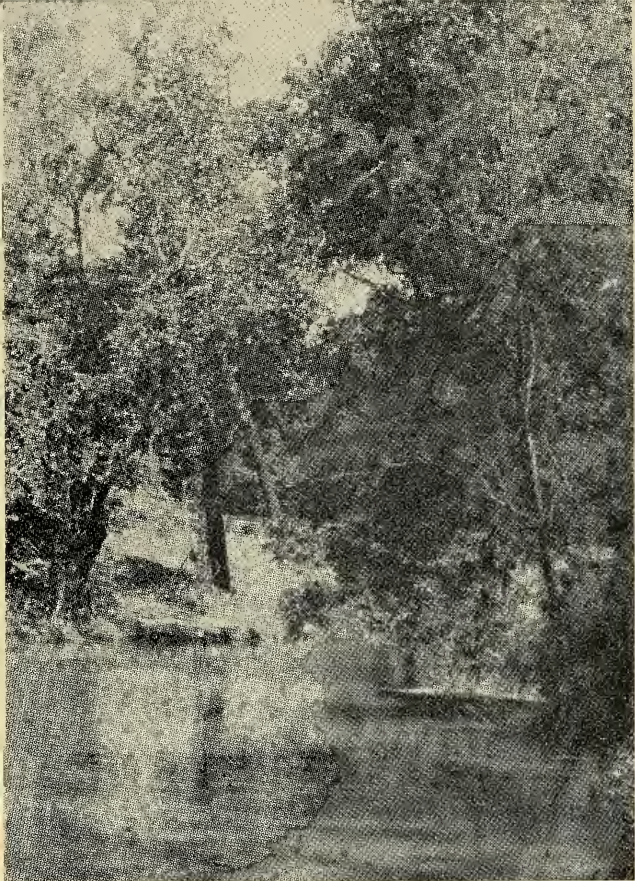


Mission San Francisco de La Espada was called San Francisco de Los Tejas when it was the first mission established in Texas.



Mission San Juan de Capistrano was moved in 1731 from East Texas to near Concepción on the San Antonio River.



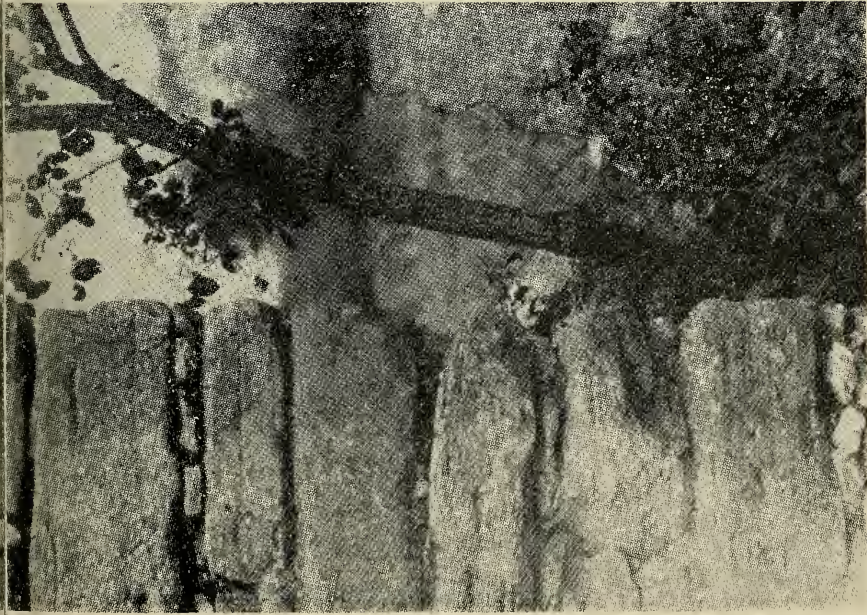


San Antonio River near Goliad, site of La Bahia and Espíritu Santo Missions, a hundred miles downstream from San Antonio.

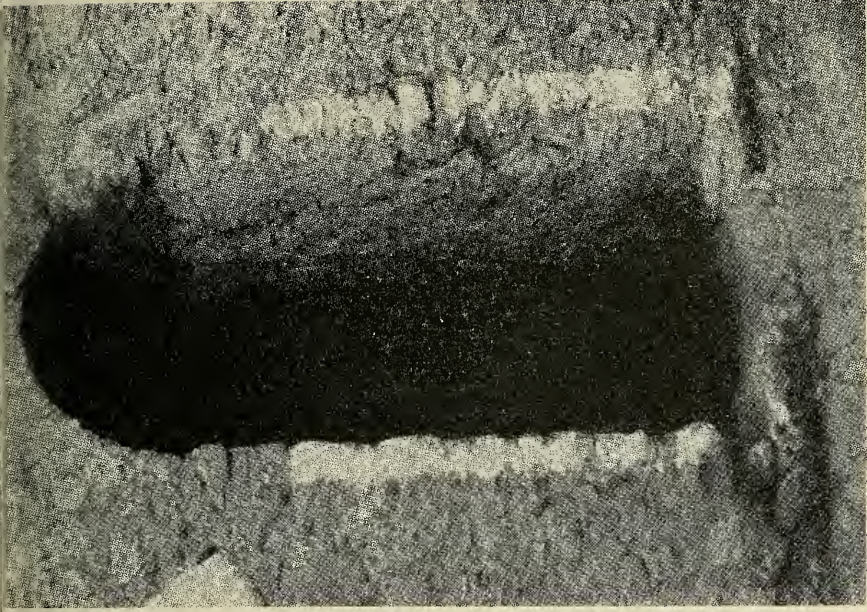
Mission La Bahia del Espíritu Santo (Nuestra Señora de la Bahía del Espíritu Santo de Zuñiga) near Goliad. Was first established on the east side of the La Vaca River on Espíritu Santo Bay.







Of stone construction like this, the San Antonio and Goliad missions still stand, while log ones in East Texas are gone. The first ones were built in 1690's.



Doorway of presidio of La Bahia showing thickness of walls. Each mission was a fortress as well as a church to protect them from Indian attacks.



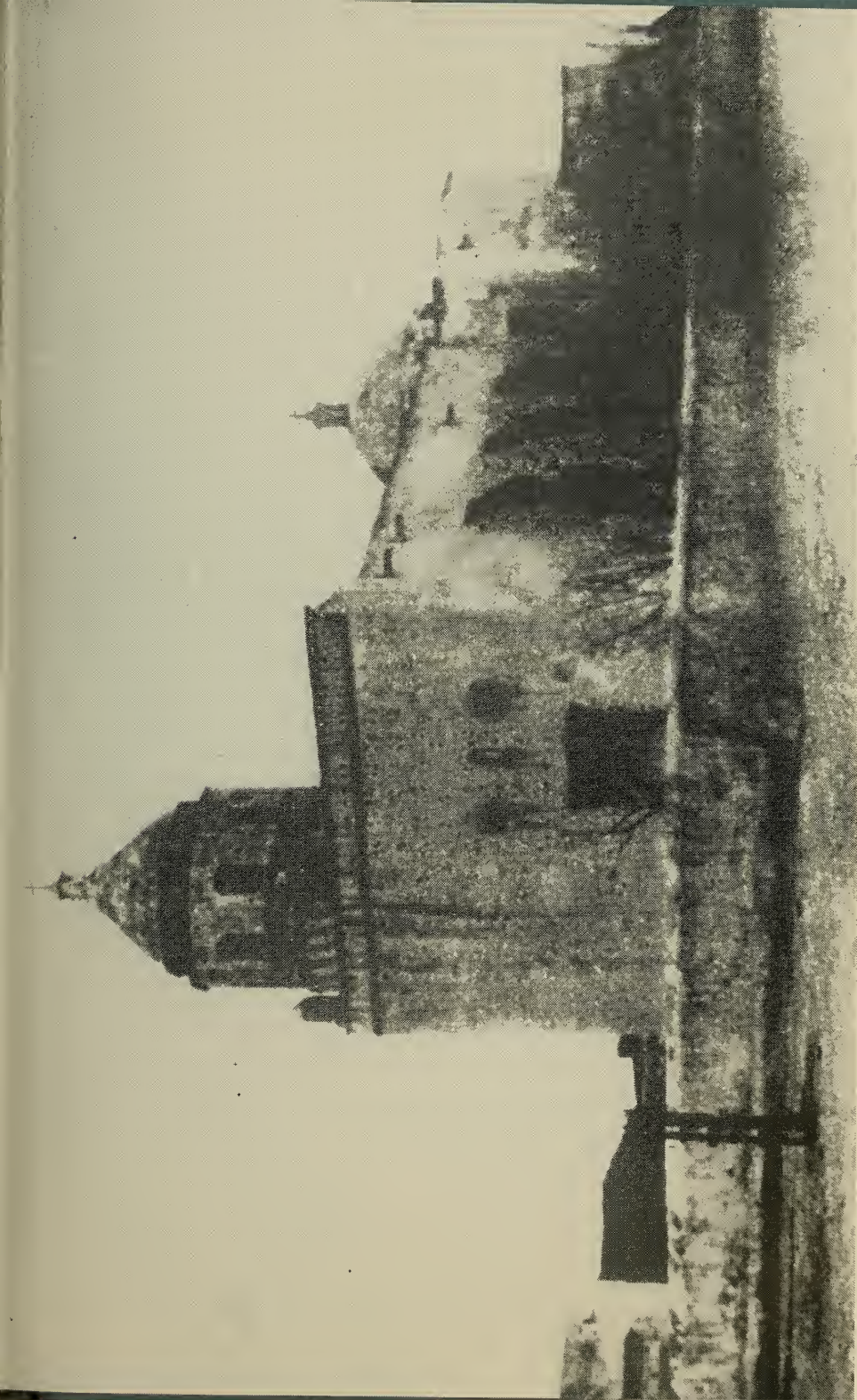


Ruins of Mission Rosario, Goliad, first established near Espiritu Santo Bay in 1754, later moved, and abandoned by Franciscans about 1809.



Presidio of La Bahia (commonly called Mission La Bahia) near Goliad. It helped protect Mission Rosario at Refugio.





San Fernando Cathedral in the early 1860's.

— Courtesy of Ben Cuellar Nimenes and Joe Raba





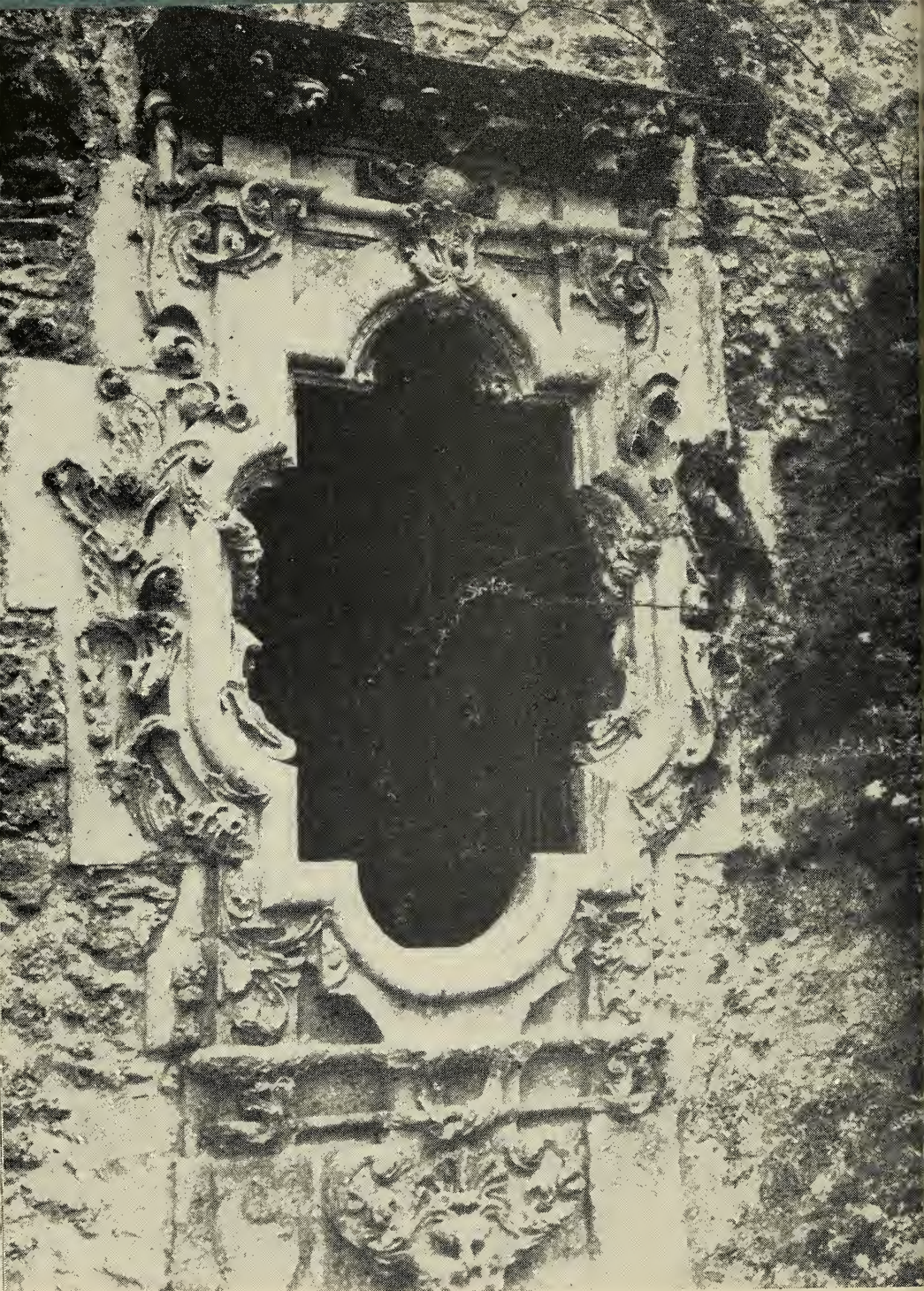
Mission San Jose, San Antonio, "queen of the missions," was by far the greatest effort of the Franciscans in Texas.





The cloister arches at San Jose at the present time.





The Rose Window of San Jose Mission took the sculptor, sent by the King of Spain, five years to carve from limestone quarried in nearby hills.

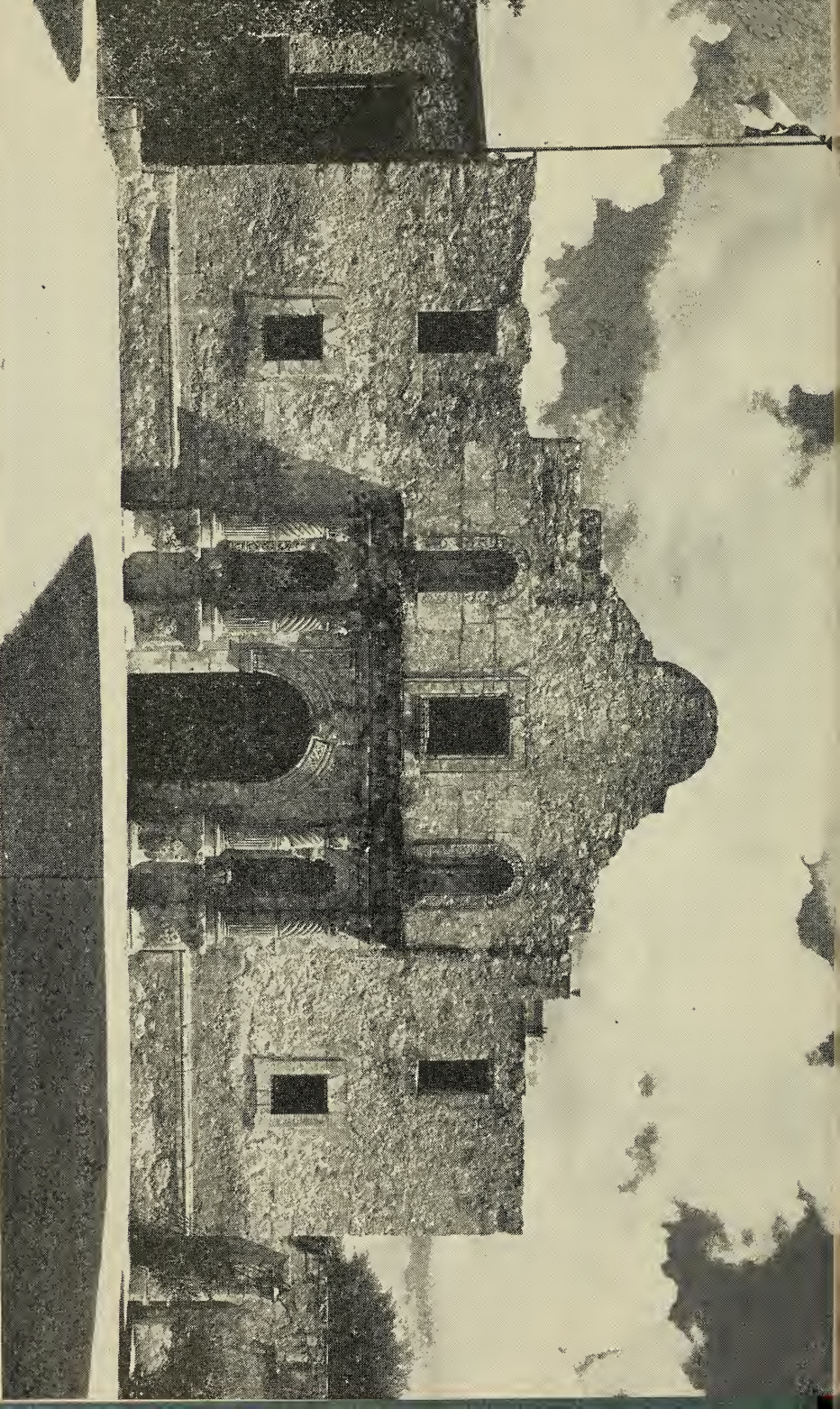




Statue of St. Anne on the beautifully carved facade of Mission San Jose.  
The upper half of this statue was restored in 1950.



Mission San Antonio de Valero, the Alamo, was built in 1744. Here was cradled Texas independence in 1836.



## St. Francis of Assisi

One summer day in the year 1219 there was unusual commotion on the hills outside the town of Assisi in Italy. An extraordinary settlement of little huts had mushroomed overnight. Whole families were encamped, making themselves at home under the sunny sky. People were bustling about, with an air of great portent, while children frolicked with their domestic pets on the warm, friendly earth. A traveler along the road would have found his way considerably slowed by wagons laden with provisions; peasants were unloading them near the settlement, assisted by noblemen who seemed happily indifferent to their fine raiment. Rufians, mysteriously turned gentle, were helping old folk to find seats as a horn blew and all assembled in the little valley below. The crowd seemed to hold its breath as a thin figure in a brown robe turned toward it and spoke in the rich, magnetic voice that could belong only to Francis of Assisi.

“My sisters and brothers, you learned that I shall soon



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sail across the sea to speak with the Moslems and try to convert them. And so you have come to wish me Godspeed. Your faith moves me and strengthens my own as I prepare to face the heathen hordes — although they, too, are our brothers whom we love. I go to tell them this and to teach them to recognize us as their kin; because we are all of us sons of the Father, and one with all humanity."

He paused for a moment and gazed at them with his ardent, dark eyes, silently compelling their will. "Is it not foolish for brothers to fight and kill one another, even in the name of the Cross? The bloody Crusades must end, and the warriors who have been absent too long will return to their homes all over Christendom. How many among you are missing sons, or husband, or father now locked in struggle or lost across the sea?"

The crowd stirred and shifted a little but did not take its gaze from the speaker. He stood before them, an aging man of middle height. Although he had been born only thirty-seven years before, his dark, pointed beard was streaked with gray, and his handsome face was lined with suffering. With his bare feet and his coarse garment belted with a common rope, it was plain that he possessed nothing of worldly riches or power. Yet his presence was surcharged with a mystical force that welded the motley group into one. He sighed as he continued: "The immensity of my task would overwhelm me, except for your prayers. I would bring to the uncomprehending heathen some knowledge of the Word. With my shaky and unworthy hands I would pass on the Torch — spread some of the Light which has been entrusted to us. Then peace will reign . . . "

Francis told them more of the mission of conversion which he planned, and his journey across the sea. He spoke until their hearts were full, then sent them back to their hill where a picnic was laid. Planks were set across barrels

## *St. Francis of Assisi*

and laden with baskets of food and drink, freely available to all. The gathering came to be known as the Assembly of the Straw Huts; the following day it dispersed. The burghers returned to the towns, the women and children to their homes, the farmers to their fields.

Soon afterward Francis and two of his followers sailed to Syria. They made their way to the city of Damietta, which was at that time under siege by the Crusaders. Past the thickets of drawn swords and the dark, astounded faces of the Moslems, the strange trio of Christians progressed until they reached their destination: the camp of Saladin, himself. There they were received with courtesy, if some bewilderment, by the sultan and his glittering entourage. To Francis, the pilgrimage to end, by love, strife between Christians and Moslems, seemed eminently practical and sensible; but to Saladin the project was incomprehensible. When Francis saw that his powers of persuasion were failing, he offered to throw himself into the fire in token of his faith and challenged the Moslem priest to do the same; the offer was rejected, but it gained for Francis the reputation of a lunatic. As such, he was deemed to be a person of uncanny powers who must be respected and unharmed.

The Tuscan tongue was unintelligible to the Saracen; the ideas expressed were even more so. The Moslems were fascinated — but not converted. All Francis' eloquence, his passionate sincerity and his genuine affection for these dark brethren failed to bridge the abyss between the two religions. He departed safe and unharmed and returned with his two companions to Italy. Their dangerous adventure could have ended in hideous tortures or death; but Francis was indestructible as only a man careless of his life can be.

Thus ended the first foreign mission of the first Franciscan — with failure and regret on his part; but, on the part of his friends, there was thankfulness and wonderment at his apparently charmed life.

## *The Spanish Missions of Texas*

Indeed, Francis always had seemed somehow set apart from the ordinary folk he loved. He came into the world under fortunate circumstances, son of the Lady Pica, a highly cultivated noblewoman from Provence, and Pietro Bernadone, prosperous importer of textiles and resident of Assisi. Shortly after his birth the babe was baptized Giovanni; but he came to be called Francesco, quite naturally, because of his mother's origin and his father's frequent trips to France in connection with his importing business. The boy was taught French for its cultural value and because it would be useful to him when he entered his father's textile firm. To Francis, however, the Provencale tongue was a thing of beauty because it was the medium for verse and song of the Troubadours. He excelled in poetical composition and poured out his romantic and mystical soul in ardent stanzas and songs in chivalric style.

This was the period when "knighthood was in flower," and the vogue for knightly accomplishments swept Europe. Francis was adept at these; he was a daring and dauntless rider and a champion at jousting. His admiring contemporaries acclaimed him King of the Youth of Assisi.

The independent city-states which made up Italy at that time constantly feuded and warred with one another. Francis and his friends were among the volunteers in a foray against Perugia and were taken captive. Months went by, and the young prisoners, except Francis, became increasingly melancholy. To sustain their spirits Francis devised endless games, spun verses and sang songs. His captors and companions alike were amazed at his cheerfulness which somehow seemed augmented by his increasing religious awareness. After more than a year in prison they were set free and returned to Assisi.

The next military adventure was directed against the city-state of Sicily, and Francis was chosen to head the ex-



## *St. Francis of Assisi*

pedition. He set out on horseback at the head of his band of men; they rode some distance when an accident befell him, or so it appeared to those who saw it. He was unhorsed and lay senseless in the road for minutes. When he recovered he mounted his horse and rode back home, abandoning the expedition once and for all. According to Francis' interpretation he was blessed by a revelation of his life's meaning; a Voice bade him turn about, repudiate war and serve the cause of peace. When he regained consciousness he obeyed the Voice and renounced the military career forever.

With this gesture Francis smashed the sparkling gold cup of success from which he had drunk so long, tasting the brew of humiliation which he chose henceforth as his portion. Friends and relatives scorned him as quitter and coward. Alone and derided, he wandered about at loose ends, trying to find himself.

His father put him to work as assistant in his textile establishment; but Francis' mind was not on profit or patterns. He was becoming increasingly sensitive to some of the harsh contrasts of the social order; the arrogance of the rich and the miseries of the poor disturbed him so intensely that he cast about for some means of changing the situation. In his confusion and youthful zeal he would give a suit of clothes to a man in ragged garments or a bolt of cloth to a beggar who entered the shop asking alms.

Finally, he went so far as to sell some bales of his father's costly textiles in order to raise money for a cause dear to his heart: the rebuilding of St. Damian's church which was falling into ruins. Pietro Bernadone, at the end of his patience, had him before the town magistrate and then the Bishop, who ordered the youth to give back the money. Francis obeyed. He flung down his purse, then stripped off his clothing declaring that he had henceforth no earthly

## *The Spanish Missions of Texas*

father. In his one remaining garment, a hair shirt, he went out into the chilly winter air, through the steep narrow streets, past the houses of tile and wrought stone with their turrets and battlements; he went through the huge gate of the massive wall that surrounded the town and wandered among the frosty groves outside it, clad only in his hair shirt, and singing. Liberated finally from ties of social position and family and even such material possessions as clothing, he sang. With nothing, he had come into his own.

Francis had intended to use the money from the sale of his father's textiles to pay for the rebuilding of St. Damian's church. Penniless, he decided to do the job with his own hands. He began to beg in the streets for the stones and other building materials. Now the citizens of the town were treated to a unique spectacle: an aristocrat who had cast off brocade for burlap; a social darling who had traded ease for misery and gloried in the exchange; above all, a beggar who asked, not for bread, but for a stone.

Gradually he rebuilt the crumbling church with the aid of several other workers who cast their lot with him. Together they ministered to the sick, begged alms for the destitute and preached on the dusty roads to all who would listen.

One way remained in which Francis felt intensely his human frailty: his horror of leprosy. He longed to conquer it. As a fearless youth it had been his one phobia. Now he prayed for fortitude to tend the lepers as he tended the other sick.

One evening as he was hurrying along the road on one of his errands of mercy he heard the shrilling of a little bell, and a moment later a wasted old woman hove into sight. "Unclean! Beware!" she cried as Francis approached. He stopped, shuddering at the ravaged white face. Here stood his horror, in human form, cowering from him. A rush of

## St. Francis of Assisi

pity swept away his repulsion. He grasped the hand of the derelict and bade her lead him to the leper colony. For the first time he saw this outpost of the damned, where those condemned to death-in-life were herded by a terrified society.

The following morning he forced himself to return. Writhing inwardly, he steeled himself to wash their sores, bind their wounds. Each day he came, with a mighty effort, to serve these forsaken ones; and gradually his old abhorrence faded, and the lepers, too, came to be included in the infinite embrace of his charity.

Until he began to frequent the lepers' colony, Francis' ties with his caste and class were not broken irretrievably. Had he desired to return to the fold of ease and luxury, he could have done so by denying the Voice and repudiating the role it directed him to play. His former companions would have been glad to blame his recent aberrations on some devil which had taken possession of him and driven him to freakish behavior. Once he had embraced the untouchables, however, he was lost from the standpoint of the world. The great bronze doors of the palaces he used to visit clanged shut against him forever.

But Francis had proved to his own inner satisfaction that "he who loseth his life shall find it." In his *Canticle of the Sun* he sang of his joy and fulfillment. He was at one with the universe.

Several years passed — years of physical poverty and spiritual abundance, of austerity and exaltation. Francis' sunny-minded gaiety and sincere devoutness were a combination which attracted disciples. Several of his old friends foreswore their affluence and joined him in good works. By the year 1210 there were about a dozen men in the group, calling themselves the Little Brown Brethren because of the plain brown tunics which they wore. They befriended the

## *The Spanish Missions of Texas*

friendless, consorted with outcasts and called the nameless their brothers.

Pressure was brought now on Francis to found an order with the official sanction of the Pope. In response to this demand he went to Rome on foot, with eleven followers, to seek the papal consent to his Rule of poverty, chastity and obedience. Innocent III, the reigning Pope, was a man of many worldly cares. The temporal power of the Church weighed heavily on the spiritual. When Francis of Assisi came before the weary leader of Christendom, the latter saw only a dusty pilgrim in torn sandals who was presenting him with an impossible petition. The Pope considered that Francis' Rule was too difficult for human beings to follow, and he lost no time in terminating the interview. But that night the Pope, it is said, had a significant dream. In it he viewed the vast structure of the Church shaking violently and about to topple into ruin — until it somehow was steadied and supported from below. Upon close scrutiny he saw that the source of support was none other than the travel-stained pilgrim who had visited him that morning. On the basis of that symbolism the Pope recalled Francis the next day, reviewed his request with the advice of the cardinals, and permission was duly granted to found the Order of the Friars Minor, or Little Brothers.

With the blessing of the Pope they went their way rejoicing. Traveling as usual on foot, they worked at any sort of task to earn their food and night's lodging. People flocked to hear them preach, and the friars increased in number. About the beloved figure of Francis a body of legend and truth, wondrously intermingled, grew up. When he visited the village of Gubbio he tamed a savage wolf which had been terrorizing the inhabitants; he addressed the beast very courteously as "Brother Wolf" and exhorted him to leave the villagers in peace, as they bore the wolf no

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grudge and promised to feed him regularly. Soon the animal was the town pet, as gentle and plump as any domestic creature. In his wanderings he met wilder beasts, wolves and foxes, but he came to no harm because even they understood and responded to his affection and good will toward all living things. He called the Sheep and Fishes his Brothers; the Doves and the Moon and the Water his Sisters. To little lambs and wild rabbits and birds he gave his special protection. Once he preached a sermon to the birds in a grove beside the road where he had paused to pray. His message has come down to us, running something like this:

“My little Sisters, in your songs you should take care to magnify the Lord, for you are much beholden to Him for everything. Consider the element of air He has ordained for you, and your wondrous wings that carry you across the world. You neither sow nor reap; but He provides grain and myriad insects and berries for your food, and rivers and rain for your drink. You neither spin nor weave; yet He clothes you and your children with feathers. Thank God, therefore, for wings and the breeze, for fountains and fruit, and ever strive to praise Him so that men may hear.”

Whereupon the birds bowed their heads in reverence until Francis made the sign of the Cross over them and gave them leave to go. They rose up as one flock; and soaring high, they divided into four parts to make a cross in the sky. There they hovered in cross-formation, caroling as never before. Then one part of the flock flew east, and others flew west, north and south. And the people who had witnessed the sight understood that Francis and the Little Brothers were like the birds—free, possessing nothing and wholly dependent upon God’s providence, as they scattered in all directions preaching His love.

They did not preach in vain. Wherever they went hundreds of people greeted them, often out of curiosity; they



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hearkened to the inspired words of Francis and his men, responded to the pristine simplicity and charity of their way of life and began at last to *live* the religion they had been professing.

Soon a riot of conversion was sweeping the countryside. It amounted to a spiritual revolution — a spontaneous uprising of the good within men's hearts. Worldlings forgot the strut and fret of ambition; richlings stopped counting their gold and gave it away for the glory of God. Plain people threw off the yoke of old anxieties and stood up straight and free, with the faith that casts out fear.

The nine-year period between 1210, when the First Order was founded, and 1219, when foreign missions first were sent out, marked the apogee of Francis' career as apostle of peace through brotherhood. Through his meditation a number of the city-states in disunited Italy stopped warring on one another, and hatred took a holiday. Men's energies were released from the business of destruction and surged outward and upward in a vast wave of creative achievement. There was the ferment of a new era in the making — a renaissance of the inner life preceded the Renaissance. Spires soared on the vaulted roofs of churches, singing of man's nostalgia for the infinite. Glass in the high windows was stained with jewel colors. Painters such as Giotto covered miles of walls with glorious frescoes. A man named Dante was writing the first fine poetry in the Tuscan tongue. And all these acts of creation were infused with a timeless quality which is still the amazement of the world.

The demand to join the Franciscan movement assumed a formidable urgency. Followers swarmed from all sides, seeking to become Friars Minor. Most of them were met with gentle refusals. Francis, with the understanding born of affection for men, realized that comparatively few were adapted to the rigors of the Order and would fall away in

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misconduct after their initial enthusiasm had waned. Still, the demand to rally around the standard of the Little Brown Brothers created a problem that pressed for solution. It reached a climax in about the year 1214.

News had reached the town of Saburniano that Francis of Assisi was soon to come there on one of his endless peregrinations through the countryside. The people made ready to receive him. Planters left their fields; merchants dropped their wares on the nearest counters; workmen threw down their tools, and all trooped excitedly outside the town to welcome the beloved wayfarer. The womenfolk and children streamed out of their homes and joined the crowd, and a sort of encampment was set up. Francis arrived and addressed them as anticipated; but when he had finished, his zealous listeners craved for more of the saint's eloquence. Even after they had heard more, they refused to return home, demanding to join the Army of God then and there. Whereupon Francis told them of the plan he had evolved in his mind for a Third Order, especially for the laity. To be a member would not involve taking vows nor leaving family. Within the framework of normal, daily existence, in home and business relationships, these lay disciples would seek to further the cause of love and brotherhood. In the privacy of their own hearts men and women would work for Franciscan ends as their consciences dictated.

When the citizens of Saburniano heard these good tidings they were content to go back to their town and toil as before, but with this difference — they could become unknown soldiers in the battalions of peace, sans badge or uniform, each one enlisted in the secrecy of his own soul. So the Third Order of Franciscans was founded, a popular movement for common men — not that any man, in the eyes of Francis, was common, but a unique spirit irreplaceable in God's universe.

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The natural outcome of such a viewpoint was the attempt to carry the light into the darkest reaches of the world. So the first foreign missions were established. In 1219, after Francis sailed to Syria to convert the Moslems, other members of the Order left Italy as bearers of the Word. Sixty friars went to Germany, others to Spain, France, Hungary and Tunis. Five braved the infidel in Morocco and suffered martyrdom, a fate which Francis is said to have sought in vain.

However, the seven years of life remaining to him after his voyage to Syria were a kind of slow martyrdom. Malaria sapped his energy and reduced him to semi-invalidism. A disease contracted in Egypt dimmed his eyesight and threatened to blot out the world whose beauty he loved as expression of God's mind. Worst of all, he saw his Order pass far beyond his control, fretted by innovations and dissension, with some five thousand friars. Some of the latter were men whose ideals and conduct were far below the standards of renunciation set by the original members. So passed the triumphant decade between 1210 and 1220 when the Little Brown Brothers first sparked their fellow men by their exaltation and joy in the love of God, their forgetfulness of self and ardent care for others. That pristine fervor was waning like the light of Francis' eyes.

In a desperate effort to stave off blindness, Francis submitted to unimaginable torture. A red-hot iron was drawn across his eyes to cure the disease that was ravaging them. Then his pain-racked body was bled several times. These savage treatments were undertaken in the autumn of 1225 when Francis was forty-three years old.

He lingered until the springtime came with its rush of sun and silky, blossom-scented breezes. On an afternoon, warm with May, Francis of Assisi returned to his hills. He begged two of his disciples to lay him bare upon his Mother



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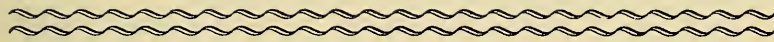
Earth so that nothing would impede his reunion with her. Perhaps she awaited the homecoming of her most loyal and lyrical son and quickened in welcome beneath him as he exhaled his final breath . . .

From under their brown hoods several of the Little Brothers were watching the passing of that tragic and exultant spirit as they gathered around him, intoning the words from the *Canticle of the Sun*: "Hail, Sister Death, that openest for me the Gates of Life."

—AURORA McCALEB PITKIN



## CHAPTER ONE



### La Salle's Colony

**I**t was in the sixteenth century — four hundred years ago — that the soil of Texas was first trod by Europeans. An eventful century it was, witnessing the culmination of an intense and heroic period of discovery and adventure, of exploration and conquest, which gave to civilization two splendid continents in the New World. It was a century that bridged a space of European history filled with unmitigated passions, sanguinary conflicts, incited by commercial, political and religious rivalries.

Four score years before the English had posted themselves in the wilderness on the Atlantic shore of North America, and many years before the French had planted their flag and the cross along the St. Lawrence, the Spaniards in Florida, Mexico and South America were making

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conquests and throwing into a degree of order the heterogeneous masses of aboriginal Indians.

For the New World it was the age of the *conquistador*. Gallant and gaudy arrays of armored knights — who had shone at Court in their native land, or who had leveled lances at the pagan — struck boldly into the unexplored and limitless unknown, searching for precious stones and metals and dreaming of empires of sun-worshippers and kingdoms of boundless wealth, only to find something more glorious still. Each of these things they found was immaterial. What they found, in fact, was too frequently death from starvation or sickness or from the arrows of the Indians.

The coast of Texas was first sighted in 1519 by Piñeda, who sailed past in search of the Strait of Anian through which it was thought Cathay and India could be reached. But no such strait was to be discovered.

It chanced that the first Europeans, so far as we know, to land in Texas were survivors of one of those ill-fated expeditions (Narváez's), which sought in 1528 an El Dorado in the regions bordering on the Gulf of Mexico. After the most extraordinary misadventures from Florida westward, the ships were wrecked on the coast of Texas — perhaps on Galveston Island. Sickness and starvation took the lives of most of the survivors. Finally, but four remained alive, one of whom was Cabeza de Vaca. They now plunged into a nameless region which came to be called Texas, and after several years of incredible wanderings and cruel experiences, they turned up on the Gulf of Lower California at Culiacán, Mexico. At once they were conveyed to Mexico City where they unfolded a story somewhat overdrawn through the distorted lens of their journeyings and sufferings, but one which stirred the viceroy to action, for they told of the fabled country of Cíbola — the Seven Cities — lying off to the north. Its conquest at once became the ardent desire of the insatiable Spaniards.

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In 1540 Francisco Vasquez de Coronado led northward out of Mexico a party bent on the conquest of the Quivira, a region which for a century was to prove a delusion and a snare. Without doubt Coronado in his quest crossed the northwestern corner of Texas; and very likely in 1543 the remnant of Hernando de Soto's men, led by Moscoso, stood within its eastern borders. Others, too, there were, besides Espejo and Oñate, who traversed portions of the state prior to the middle of the sixteenth century.

Up to this time the nations of Europe had given little thought to the settlement of the vast, undefined territories they claimed in the Western seas. Conditions were not favorable — the events which drove men and women to emigrate had not yet fully developed. The circumstances which entered into so large and well-defined a movement as that which peopled America cannot here be touched upon, for the very bases of Western civilization were involved.

However, the Spaniards advancing north came to discover the rich silver mines of Coahuila — and the need for labor brought them to send companies of soldiers across the Rio Grande to capture Indians who were brought back and put to work in the mines.

Tales were brought back of other and more fabulous regions to the north. So much interest was created that between 1580 and 1605 numerous entries were made into the region beyond the Rio Grande. The Big Bend and Pecos River country were crossed and recrossed.

The Franciscans, despite buffetings of fortune, continued to enter the Texas country and to strive for its permanent occupation. In 1650 Hernán Martín and Diego del Castillo from New Mexico marched into the Nueces (Concho) country.

In 1673 Fray Juan Larios entered Texas and taught the Indians in the district of the present Eagle Pass and Del

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Rio. He labored there for three years, but no permanent settlement came of it.

It is to be noted that by 1676 report of the Kingdom of the Tejas was widespread — so much so that the Bishop of Guadalajara said in a letter to the King: "The people of that nation, which they call Tejas . . . live under an organized government, congregate in pueblos, and are governed by a *cacique*, who is named the Great Lord . . . They have homes made of wood, cultivate the soil, plant maize and other crops, wear clothes and punish misdemeanors, especially theft."

Such were rumors of the tribe that was to give its name to the state. And these rumors could not have failed to reach the Franciscans. Quietly, but persistently, they pressed for an advance into the region north of the Rio Grande. It is strange that so little account has been taken of the almost constant entries made into the still little-known country of Tejas.

Suffice it that toward the middle of the seventeenth century interest began to be directed systematically toward the unknown land lying to the east of the Rio Grande, or the Rio Bravo, a land then vaguely called the New Philippines. This interest was stimulated by the explorations of Conde Diego de Peñalosa, an adventurer fresh from conquests in South America, who became governor of New Mexico in 1661. He made several incursions into the lands eastward from Santa Fé. He became inflamed with a desire to make conquests in that region and returned to Mexico in 1664 to set forth flaming accounts of his discoveries, urging upon the authorities the advisability of penetrating into that country. Failing in this and being denounced by the Holy Inquisition, he left Mexico, appearing after a decade in France where he laid his plans before Louis XIV.

Two years later Peñalosa's schemes for the conquest of

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the vast regions which lay between the Mississippi and the Spanish settlements in Mexico received a strong supporter in Sieur de la Salle, who was just returned from extraordinary wanderings in the Mississippi Valley. He had descended the river from Canada. His proposals for the aggrandizement of France in the New World at the expense of Spain pleased the ambitious Louis.

Peñalosa's scheme involved the planting of a colony at the mouth of the Rio Grande, and thence to spread the power of the arms of France over the surrounding country. Later his plan was modified. Like the true filibuster that he was, he now bethought him to fall upon Pánuco, the most easterly Gulf settlement of the Spaniards in Mexico. This would then be the center for future operations against the Spanish dominions which still, in the inflamed imagination of Europeans, were dotted with mines of gold and precious stones.

But the cooperation of the Spanish refugee was discouraged. He dropped out of the picture. Louis commanded the fitting-out of an expedition to be headed by La Salle. Louis issued to him, under date of April 14, 1684, a commission to conquer and govern the region lying between Fort St. Louis on the Illinois River and the Nueva Biscaya. To one of La Salle's heroic spirit the task seemed light, and forthwith he set about the preparation of his company.

It was not a difficult matter to secure the necessary number of adventurers — two hundred and eighty, all told — seamen, soldiers, artisans, priests, women. A fleet of four vessels was provided: the *Joli*, a ship of thirty-six guns; the *Belle*, a frigate; the *Aimable*, a store ship; and the *St. Francis*, a ketch. On July 24, 1684, the expedition put to sea from the port of Rochelle, destined for the mouth of the Mississippi; but it was fated — after eight months of weary sufferings and disease — to miss that point and to land in February in Matagorda Bay on the southern coast of Texas. Of its fate we shall hear more.



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La Salle's misfortunes, however, had begun much earlier — the most serious of which was the loss off Santo Domingo to the Spaniards of the ketch *St. Francis*. Now indeed the Spaniards learned, what had not been reported from home, that the French were to establish a post on soil which, beyond all question, appertained to Spain.

The next misfortune came in the wrecking and almost total loss of the *Aimable* with the stores of provisions, arms and munitions. Meantime, a settlement had been made a few miles inland on the Garcitas Creek, but the labor of erecting shelter and the depressing monotony of life with its circumscribed routine of duties told rapidly on the French morale. Some became discouraged and mutinous; others joined Beaujeu, the naval commander of the expedition — who had constantly opposed La Salle's plans — and the *Joli* hoisted sail and left the colony to its fate.

The ghastly shadow of that fate was not long in appearing. Sickness of a virulent form (smallpox) spread through the settlement decimating its ranks. Accidents and misfortunes aggravated by the hostility of the coast Indians and internal dissensions left demoralization rampant.

There were unsuccessful attempts on the part of La Salle to reach the Mississippi River; the third culminated in his murder by his own men. This meant that the enterprise had failed utterly.

II It happened that a Spanish Corsair off Santo Domingo captured one of La Salle's ships, the ketch, *St. Francis*. It has been reported that the destination and purposes of La Salle were learned from the prisoners. However, this is a much controverted point. Naturally, La Salle's plan to found a settle-



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ment on the Gulf Coast alarmed the viceroy, the Marquis of Laguna, who sent orders to the governor of Havana to have the coast raked for the intruders; and the search was begun both by sea and by land. But we cannot here take count of all these. There were at least five by sea and many by land. From Florida, Havana, New Mexico and from two or three places in New Spain expeditions went forth to run down the hated rival in the race for the conquest of the New World.

It happened that in Mexico from time to time rumor came of white men among the Indians; and at last Juan Francisco, a deserter from the colony, actually came into the power of the viceroy. Now no longer was there a doubt, and from information gathered there could also be no failure in discovering the intruders.

The governor of the kingdom of Nuevo León, Marquis de Aguayo, had early received instructions from the viceroy concerning the incurison of the French. Following this injunction Captain Alonso de León with a company of fifty men set out to explore the coast northward from Tampico. Crossing in due course the Rio Grande, he continued along the coast until stopped by lagoons at the mouth of a river he named Salo, which might have been the Nueces. At this point he returned on his trail, having heard nothing of any civilized life in all the region.

About this time an Indian of the Quems nation appeared at the mission Caldera in Coahuila. He reinforced the rumor which had become current — there were white men among the northern Indians. What was more to the point, he averred that he had been in a village inhabited by white men upon the coast to the north, that he could lead the way thither. This was no doubt the long-sought settlement. And Fray Damian Massanet, but recently arrived from Spain, who had acted as interpreter, hastened to impart this informa-

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tion to his superiors.

Captain de León, commander of the *presidio* of Coahuila, at once took steps to verify the Indian's revelations by dispatching him northward on a sixty-league journey to a *rancheria* where he had seen a white man. The Indian, known as Juan, had spoken truly, and presently the Frenchman, Juan Enrique (Juan Francisco), a native of New France and an early deserter from La Salle's colony, was in the hands of De León, who promptly sent him to Mexico City to the viceroy.

At this juncture, Galve succeeded to the viceroyalty of New Spain. He commanded that De León search out the French who, by royal order, were to be exterminated in civilized fashion.

On March 16, 1689, with a force numbering eighty men — forty from Vizcaya and forty from Nuevo León — with Fray Damian Massanet as chaplain, De León set out on this, his fourth quest. (There had been five by sea.) On March 30 they crossed the Rio Grande under the guidance of Juan, the Quems Indian — pursuing a northeasterly course.

The country through which they passed was largely prairie clothed in luxuriant grass. Here and there the land was broken with hills whose sides were set with mesquite trees and thorny shrubs. From day to day they encountered herds of buffalo which afforded abundant supply of meat. In the course of their journeying they crossed and named the rivers Nueces, Sarco (Frio), Hondo (León), Medina, and León; on April 14 they camped on the Guadalupe River. Here it was determined that the force should be divided, De León leading sixty men toward the French fort, which the guide avowed to be near.

Not far upon his way De León captured an Indian who led the party to his village where, upon inquiry, it was developed that a few days earlier four white men had passed

with a band of Tejas Indians. Here, too, they learned of the destruction of Fort St. Louis. This had in fact taken place about two months before, the settlement having been wiped out by the coast Indians. A few of the colonists had escaped, among whom were those mentioned above. De León went in pursuit of these, only to learn in a second Indian village that the white men had gone on across the San Marcos River (Colorado) toward the land of the Tejas tribes. Thereupon De León dispatched a letter to the Frenchmen full of kindly assurances, bidding them join him on the site of the old settlement, toward which point he resumed his march.



April 22, De León, with his gaily caparisoned cavalcade of sixty followers, actually reached the site of Fort St. Louis on the Garcitas Creek. The fort was in ruins, blackened and bloody and unmindful of the high hopes of its founders — ruins which were destined to blaze a path through a century and a half of history.

Six small picket houses plastered with mud and covered with the skins of buffalo; a larger building for the housing of animals; and a fort constructed from timbers of one of the wrecked vessels — the *Aimable* — made up the village. The fort was of two stories; the lower had four rooms, in one of which an altar had been erected, while the upper floor had served as a storeroom. Hard by were the remains of several swivels and eight guns of four and six pounds. Upon the casing of the door of the fort was written the date of the settlement. There was none to write the last melancholy chapter. But that was told in part by broken boxes and barrels; the remnants of the furnishings of the rude houses; the valueless tackle of a ship; broken cutlasses, and stocks of harquebuses; torn books with the leaves scattered about;

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and by the bodies of three of the dead, one of which, from the tattered clothing clinging to it, was pronounced a woman. To complete the picture, let one think of a half-score of French refugees scattered among the tribes of the wilderness of Tejas; and somewhere in that wilderness the decaying body of the great La Salle, murdered by his followers.

De León was not content with the discovery of the settlement. He explored the Espíritu Santo Bay for a considerable distance, locating the hulk of the wrecked storeship. On his return to the fort he found a letter from the Frenchmen, begging that he wait a little while for them. He did so but lost no time. With a squad of twenty, De León rode to the east, discovering the Río de San Marcos (probably the La Vaca), which he traced for some leagues. Upon his return he found that the Frenchmen still delayed. Whereupon, with twenty men, he went in search of them, sending the rest of his force back to the Guadalupe where they were to await him.

Three days later De León reached the Guadalupe, having found two of the Frenchmen — Jean L'Archeveque (Juan Archbepe), a native of Bayonne and one of La Salle's murderers; and Santiago Grollet, a sailor who had deserted La Salle on his first journey in search of the Mississippi. The other Frenchmen — Pierre Meusnier and Pierre Talon — fearing the professions of the Spaniards, chose to remain with the Tejas tribes.

### **IV**

Apart from the recovery of the Frenchmen by De León, there occurred at this time a more significant event. On the Guadalupe River he fell in with a hunting party of the Tejas Indians, among whom was an influential chief. Manifesting a friendly disposition, the Indians were treated with kindness. Both De León and Fray Massanet were impressed with the

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intelligence and superior character of these representatives of the Tejas. They devoted themselves to winning the esteem of their chief. Presents were given him, but Massanet outvied De León in zeal, for he promptly conceived the notion of Christianizing this wayward and lost Tejas tribe. So he gave the chief some blankets and a horse and, through the aid of an interpreter, led him to understand that he wished to send friars among his people. The chief welcomed such a program, and the happy meeting ended with Massanet promising to return and bring with him some holy men at the next planting time. The Spaniards had been made to understand that the home of the tribe was a hundred leagues from the sea and far to the east.

May 3, 1689, was the date of the breaking-up of camp on the Guadalupe. The Indians went their way, while De León and party took up their course toward Mexico, reaching the presidio of Coahuila (afterwards Coahuila) on May 15. The two Frenchmen were sent at once to the viceroy in charge of Captain Francisco Martínez, and the ensuing year, under Andres Pez, they were started to Spain.

Upon the return of De León to Mexico City, the details of the fate of La Salle's colony were learned by the Spaniards. The story was dramatic. The survivors told how the strength of the fort gradually had melted away; how La Salle had gone with the strongest in search of the Mississippi; how the smallpox had thinned the ranks of the villagers; how months passed with no relief and little promise of deliverance. Slowly hope had faded, for the very prison walls which nature cast about them — endless expanse of untrodden forests, unfathomed streams and trackless wastes of ocean — were inexorable as death. There was no escape. But death was to come to them in a violent form. The Frenchmen related that in February, 1689 — almost four years from the time of their landing on the Garcitas — the Indians, who professed to have been offended by La Salle's taking their canoes



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upon his arrival, fell upon the colonists. All were massacred excepting five who were saved by Indian women who carried them away on their backs. Of these five, four were children of a Canadian, Talon — three boys and a girl. The other one saved was Eustache Breman, a Parisian.

The ruse employed by the natives on this occasion was one which had worked successfully many times during the pioneer age of the New World. They pretended friendship. Some gathered at one of the houses in the village where they noisily bartered for trinkets. Naturally the colonists came out, eager for any distraction; the Indians increased in numbers until, at the appointed moment, a band of them rushed up from the river where they had lain in hiding. The slaughter was soon over. Then the houses were ripped open, and the contents which pleased the vanity or the cupidity of the Red Men were appropriated. The rest they destroyed.

It happened that four Frenchmen — Grollet, Meusnier, Talon and L'Archeveque — were among the Tejas Indians at the time of the disaster. Upon hearing of it, they returned, burying fourteen of the dead and destroying some barrels of gunpowder which the barbarians had failed to discover.

The news reported by the captive Frenchmen was received by the viceroy with unfeigned enthusiasm, for the matter of the French colony in that quarter had become an absorbing theme. To report its destruction to the home government in Madrid was a cause for congratulation. Also the story told by the Frenchmen was supplemented by glowing accounts from both Captain de León and Fray Massanet, the former lauding the riches of the regions through which they had passed, the latter praising the excellent character of the natives. Both De León and Massanet were eager to return to the land beyond the Rio Grande.

Fray Massanet hastened to enlist his order in the cause of sending missionaries to the infidels. He left Coahuila, reaching his college at Querétaro on October 24, 1689,

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where the subject was discussed and assistance granted. He then went to Mexico City where he arrived November 5. Luzuriaga, the head of the Franciscan order in Mexico, opposed the plan submitted by Massanet; but at this juncture Padre Juan Capistrano, who had just arrived from Spain, succeeded to the presidency of the Franciscans. The new officer favored the scheme for sending missionaries to the Tejas.

When De León joined Massanet in Mexico City and proposed an enlarged enterprise into Texas with a view to occupation, it was vetoed, and the good padre was seized with despair. Presently, however, the rumor spread that the French were once more landed in Texas. Massanet, foremost now in the movement, gathered his robes about him, nor asked who had been responsible for the rumor.

Then an Indian suddenly came with the news that eighteen Frenchmen had settled in the Tejas country. Presto! A conference was called at which Massanet and De León appeared to set forth their opinions. The result was all they desired — another expedition was ordered, much wider in scope, and with a purpose which marked the end of an era and the beginning of another in the history of Texas. No longer were there to be simply sporadic incursions into the vast Nuevas Philipinas. The Mission Period, which was to extend across the eighteenth century, was begun.





## CHAPTER TWO

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# Mission San Francisco de los Tejas

**I**t would not be possible for one to understand the Mission Period of Texas history without some acquaintance with European affairs of the time. Knowledge of the politics of the day is not sufficient. A prerequisite to an adequate conception of the nature of the movement is a grasp of the spirit of medievalism, the central inspiration of which found its expression in monasticism. The farther one got from the world and its contaminations, the more plainly was blazed the path to everlasting life. Conversely, the thing of greatest value on earth was the human soul.

It was this philosophy working in the minds of the peoples of Europe that sent crusade after crusade to the Holy Land, that waged a relentless war against the pagans, that scattered Jesuit and Franciscan from the farthest shores of Tartary to

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the wilds of trackless America. To save men's souls was what they sought.

They joined hands with the political forces of Spain in all her conquests in the New World. In Mexico the friars advanced with the soldiers, the latter forcing allegiance to the political interests of the mother country, the former claiming meekly or with insistence his spiritual obedience. Perhaps the most amazing in it all was the marvelous success which attended the banners of Spain in both these fields. Especially is it true of the latter. Tribe after tribe of the native races of the Americas abandoned their gods and followed the way of their teachers, and they have not abandoned that way. In the course of time there were erected in every part of New Spain religious structures which still stand as monuments to their patience and to their heroic zeal. No land was too remote, no savage too wild, to stay the march of the friars.

And so, very naturally, the region to the north and east of the Rio Grande — but a hazy blank on the map — came early to attract the barefoot, brown-robed Franciscans, intent on saving souls. Perhaps through the reports of adventurers, or from Cabeza de Vaca, they had come first to hear of tractable tribes to the east. Thereupon the missionary spirit urged them into the new and unevangelized regions. However, they had to wait. The moment had not arrived, but they continued to hope for an agent to call them to battle in that quarter. And at last it came, and Fray Massanet and his associates eagerly went forth to the task which they prosecuted with indomitable devotion. They were true disciples of St. Francis.

The viceroy of New Spain, seated in Mexico City, under stimulus of a notice that again Frenchmen were trespassing in the region of the Tejas far to the east, ordered another expedition to march into that country. This time, however, a different course was to be pursued; the purpose of the enter-

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prise was much enlarged. De León was instructed to inspect the environs of Matagorda Bay and to destroy the fort which La Salle had erected. Then he was to aid Fray Massanet in planting a mission among the Tejas Indians.

The purpose of the viceroy was plain. He looked to the permanent settlement of the country as the best safeguard for the interests of Spain. Such a settlement could be made in no way so securely and with so little effort as through the agency of a mission. That lesson had been taught in every chapter of Mexican and South American conquest. The arm of the Church was everywhere the willing instrument of the state — and a mighty arm it was. The inter-reliance of the one upon the other was as complete and absolute at the end of the seventeenth century as it had been at its beginning.

For his enterprise De León was granted one hundred and ten men to be assembled from the presidios of Coahuila, Sombrerete, Zacatecas and the Kingdom of Nuevo León. Furthermore, there were collected one hundred and fifty burdens (a load for a donkey or mule) of meal, two hundred beefs, four hundred horses, twelve *quintales* (two hundred pounds) of powder, and twelve *arrobas* (three hundred pounds) of balls.

For the use of the missionaries — four in all — there were twenty mule-loads of wine, wax (for candles), clothing and gifts, together with six loads of tobacco. The *junta*, or council, before which Massanet appeared in Mexico City, had ordered that he should take with him as many friars as he deemed necessary for the work of establishing missions, and that they should be provided with everything they needed. Fray Massanet had at that time stated that for the Tejas missions he would take three, he himself making the fourth. The names of the three were: Fray Miguel de Fonte-Cubierto, Fray Francisco Jesús María and Fray Antonio Bordoy.

On March 28, 1690, the expedition left the presidio of Coahuila, which had been the point of reunion. But De

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León's force was short twenty men, numbering only ninety instead of one hundred and ten. Few were disciplined soldiers. The company was composed chiefly of shoemakers, masons, tailors, miners and adventurers — a motley, incoherent group, inspired by selfish motives and foredooming to failure the enterprise. Theirs was not a purpose to take up an abode in the wilderness. They sought but adventure or gold. They had not crossed the Rio Grande before bickerings and quarrels had arisen between men and officers. Several men were wounded in affrays — military discipline was a farce.

Having crossed the Rio Grande, they advanced in a northeasterly direction, pursuing possibly the same course as on a former expedition. Upon reaching the Guadalupe, the main body remained in camp; De León, with twenty men, marched down to the coast and fulfilled to the letter the orders of the viceroy. Fray Massanet himself set fire to the fort which, because of a high wind, soon was reduced to ashes. De León then made further explorations of the bay and of the river upon whose banks the fort had stood. He then returned to the camp on the Guadalupe, the company at once taking up its eastward march.

After some leagues had been traversed, a scouting party fell in with a band of Indians among whom were two Frenchmen — Pierre Talon and Pierre Meusnier — of whom De León had heard on his former entry. They were made prisoners.

An event of much more significance, however, was the arrival in the Spanish camp of the Tejas chief with some of his warriors whom Massanet had met the previous year. The Indians had anticipated the return of the friar and had come out prepared with the peace pipe. The march was resumed, and a few days later the Trinity River was crossed; on May 22 the Spaniards entered the chief village of the Tejas, three



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leagues from the Neches to the east. There they were warmly welcomed.

Work was begun at once on the necessary buildings for the missionary establishment. Logs were cut in the forest which spread in solemn quietude about them — an endless wilderness; and presently a church and lodgings for the friars were erected. A cross was set up and on June 1, Corpus Christi day, Mass was sung, the Indians joining in the procession to the church. Then came the feast of the Most Holy Sacrament; a salute was fired and the royal banner was displayed. On one side was the picture of Christ crucified; on the other that of the Virgin Guadalupe. Then the *Te Deum Laudamus* was chanted, and the first mission within the confines of East Texas had been consecrated. It was called San Francisco de los Tejas in honor of St. Francis, the founder of the Franciscan Order.

The same day the company — save Fray Massanet who remained one day longer to give additional instructions to the friars — turned upon its path, heading for Coahuila. But the short stay of the soldiers among the Indians had been long enough to rouse them almost to open rebellion. Excesses of diverse kinds had been committed. All to no purpose had the natives brought their complaints to Captain de León who took no step to arrest the disorders. The most serious disturbance arose over insults offered the Indian women by the soldiers. To add to the confusion, De León and Massanet were early at loggerheads, the former insisting that fifty men should be left under Nicholas Prieto for the protection of the mission, Massanet protesting that three were adequate as the infidels were perfectly friendly. Finally De León yielded.

Three men, supplied with powder and ball, were left behind to keep up a show of military authority, while for the purposes of the mission there were left twenty-six burdens of meal, twenty cows and two yoke of oxen, besides plows, axes, hoes and other agricultural implements. And Frays

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Fonte Cubierta, Francisco de Jesús María and Antonio Bordenado remained behind to teach the natives not only something of the ways of civilized men, but to lead them in spiritual paths, which after all was the ultimate goal. De León, however, thought that the enterprise should be primarily military. He felt that it was being planted to defeat the French in their expansion program. This conflict between Massanet and De León led the following year to the latter's displacement in the command.

However, De León did learn of the presence among the East Texas Indians of Tonty, one of La Salle's lieutenants, who had come down from Fort St. Louis in search of the French. Tonty had wanted to make friends with the Tejas tribes but was told that the Spaniards were expected. So Tonty, the Iron-Handed, returned to Fort St. Louis in the Illinois country and wrote a clear story of his adventures.

Captain de León had not traveled far on his return journey when he heard of yet other survivors of the French colony — three children, whom he proposed to rescue, descending with part of his men to the south on such a quest. They were located without trouble, but the Indians rather reluctantly released them in exchange for horses. The children were Robert, Lucien and Marie Talon, who were conveyed to Mexico and thence dispatched to Spain.

The company was reunited on the Guadalupe, whence the march for Mexico was continued. Nothing of moment transpired, if indeed one passes over the brawls and thefts which took place among the soldiers and the crimes perpetrated against the natives. Captain de León was still inactive, manifesting a stolid indifference through it all. With only such incidents to distract them, they reached the Rio Grande which was in flood. For eighteen days they were delayed. They finally got across by raft and swimming. One man was lost by drowning.

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Meantime the king had approved these measures of the viceroy and ordered in September, 1690, that further and more extended operations should be undertaken. By this time the practical difficulties which had to be surmounted in operating so far from one's base of supplies were known, and steps were taken to overcome them. The company by land was to be supported by a sea force. In other words, the bulk of provisions and gifts would be sent around by sea.

When these new dispensations had been ordered, the viceroy, El Conde de Galve, set about the preparation of a new enterprise. One of his first acts was to appoint Don Domingo Terán de los Rios, governor of Coahuila and Texas. Under him were placed fifty men, while the expedition by sea was to convey forty more who were to be sent out from Veracruz to Espíritu Santo Bay.

Galve, the viceroy, took great pains to discuss with his *junta* every point involved in the enterprise and to lay down for its commander emphatic rules of action. The first object of the expedition was the succoring of San Francisco de los Tejas and the establishing of eight other missions, three of which were to be among the Tejas, four among the Candauchos, and one on the Guadalupe. In the matter of reducing the Indians, peaceable methods were to be employed. This would not only tend to win their regard for the Spaniards in general but would incline them to receive the mild teachings of the ecclesiastics. (The natives were said to be *reduced* — *Indios reducidos* — when they settled about a mission and accepted the Catholic faith. *Indios bravos* were those who opposed this program.)

The second point emphasized by the viceroy was that which concerned the rooting-out of any foreign people whatsoever who had chanced to take up their abode in that region. The notion haunted the Spanish mind and continued for a long time to rouse in it distrust that the French were about to steal from them some of the sweet fruits of their dis-



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covery. Moreover, the trouble they had in locating La Salle's colony led the officials in Mexico to suspect that possibly another colony of Europeans might somewhere exist in the unheard-of expanses of Tejas. At least some of the survivors of Fort St. Louis were still among the Indians, who were to be recovered.

Point three referred directly to the exploration of the Indian country, especially that of the Candadachos; the rivers were to be examined as to their courses, sources and mouths; and the various tribes were to be studied with regard to their customs, characters and religious beliefs.

In spite of the efforts made to throw into prominence the missionary aspects of the expedition, the results—in keeping with the general trend of Spanish politics—tend to show that the religious orders were to be used to serve a purpose. It was not primarily for the sake of converting the natives that the viceroy had ordered out the expedition, but for the purpose of discovering whether the title to those domains was being infringed by certain bold agents of the *Grand Monarque*. It was primarily to ascertain this and to provide against the contingency of a recurrence of French occupation that Terán went forth into Texas. The Spaniards would themselves permanently occupy the country. Experience had shown them that in no way could it be so securely done as through spiritual agency.

Governor Terán, as stated, was to have fifty soldiers fully supplied with arms and ammunition; the sea adjunct was to be composed of forty skilled sailors, perhaps the better to explore the coast and rivers. Fray Damian Massanet, head of the religious section, took with him to serve the eight new missions fourteen friars and several lay brothers and such attendants as were deemed necessary. In order that the establishments should not suffer from want, extensive supplies of provisions, together with a considerable herd of cattle, horses, sheep and goats, were provided. The

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dispensing of these supplies was placed under the control of Fray Massanet. The final authority, however, was vested in Terán, who could therefore order the expedition whither he would; in short, its success or failure was in his hands.

The preliminaries were arranged satisfactorily; there was not a hitch in the scheme for the general reunion which took place in the early part of May. Herds and flocks, friars and soldiers, powder and provisions — all were ready; and on May 16, 1691, the goodly company set out for Monclova. Their route lay along the beaten path until they had crossed the Rio Grande, where they were delayed a few days because of a storm of wind and rain. Resuming their march at the Hondo, they quit the old trail and struck directly toward the land of the Tejas. Each of the streams crossed received a new name, in no sense in accord with the names which had been given them by earlier expeditions. A curious and perplexing problem arose from this indiscriminate naming of rivers. In the course of time it became practically impossible to identify a place by its name, for the same name probably had been applied to several other points.

They crossed again the wide prairies with their teeming thousands of buffalo; emerging from the rank thickets which at times blocked their way, they came to the Colorado River, known for many years as the San Marcos. Eight days earlier, however, some Indians had joined the party on the Guadalupe, bringing letters from Mission San Francisco de los Tejas. The news was that disease had ravaged the ranks of the natives — and that on February 5 Fray Fonte Cubierta had died. The situation was disturbing.

Passing down the Colorado, crossing it for the third time, a camp was made while, following the instructions of the viceroy, Captain Francisco Martínez — with twenty soldiers, one hundred and fifty horses and baggage animals — marched down to the Espíritu Santo to meet the sea ex-

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pedition which sailed from Veracruz. Martínez lingered a week on the coast, vainly seeking some sign of the fleet; then, leaving a letter with the Indians which was to be delivered to the Spaniards upon their arrival, he returned. On the eighteenth of July he had rescued Jean Baptiste Talon and Eustache Breman, two of the boys who had been saved by the Indian women from the indiscriminate massacre which had befallen Fort St. Louis.

Things had gone fairly well up to this time; but the failure to meet the sea expedition at once precipitated a dispute as to what was next to be done. Governor Terán urged that another squad of ten men be dispatched to the Bay, there to remain for fifteen or twenty days in quest of the delaying fleet. The main company was meantime to remain in camp. To this proposition, however, Massanet and the other friars dissented. They thought it much better for the entire company to go on to the Tejas Mission, and thence a second search party might be sent forth. Massanet urged that the coast Indians were unkindly disposed; that the ten men might meet with disaster; and that their first duty was to relieve Mission San Francisco which had been so long in distress. The council which had been called to discuss the situation adopted Massanet's plan, and the expedition accordingly went on its way.

It cost them two days to cross the herds over the Brazos, known also as the San Geronimo and Rio del Espíritu Santo. It took a day to get over the Trinity, whereat the friars became restless and pushed on ahead to Mission San Francisco, where they were met by Francisco de Jesús María and Antonio Bordoy, the Franciscans who had been laboring in that part of the Master's vineyard. They related the circumstances of the death by fever of Fray Fonte Cubierta; how a fatal epidemic had swept away in a single month three hundred of the Asinais and how among the Tejas tribes three thousand had perished. The results of their labors

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during the year they had been in that quarter were narrated. They had continued their work at San Francisco and at another mission which they themselves had planted.

The name of the new mission was Santa María, so designated because the cross had been raised on September 12, 1690, the anniversary of the victory of Vienna. It was located on the river Archangel San Miguel (Neches), thirteen leagues east of the Trinity, in the country of the Caddachos and had been specially the charge of Fray Francisco de Jesús María, who has left us an interesting account of his experiences in a *relacion* to the viceroy. The mission had been fairly prosperous, Father María having baptized prior to August 15, 1691, seventy-six Indians of whom five were medicine men.

At last, however, a change came. An epidemic swept over the country; drought parched the earth; the corn was destroyed; and to pestilence was added famine such as the land had never known. Then it was, Fray María says, that the devil put it into the heads of the infidels that the plague was due to the missionaries. So severe were the ravages that during the month of March more than three hundred Indians succumbed. The natives, too, at first had been confiding and contented, but now they held a council, declaring that the newcomers had brought the disease and must suffer accordingly. At this juncture, however, Father María had silenced them for a time by inquiring whether or not they were also responsible for the death of a soldier and of Fray Fonte Cubierta, who had died of the plague. While this appeal had satisfied the mass of the Indians, the medicine men, who saw their influence waning and who were really the instigators of the plot against the missionaries, continued their agitations. They carried their opposition to the point of interfering with the baptism of a woman by the padre. The great Xinesi, chief of the nine tribes of the Tejas, was baptized and miraculously recovered from the



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disease, promising to be a very good Christian thenceforth.

But the situation gradually grew worse; the epidemic increased in virulence; the two soldiers persisted in licentiousness; and, worst of all, the supply of gifts ran short. The latter fact was stressed by Fray María. Gifts for the natives amounted to a positive necessity. Indeed, he said in his simplicity, the infidel would often submit to baptism for the sake of a present. Another point which was treated at length in Father María's report was the necessity of introducing soldiers with wives. He stated that the Indians demanded married men, and he himself wanted none of the criminal class who, if they were sent out, would bring the work of the friars to naught.

In such a predicament had Terán found the country upon his arrival, August 4, 1691. Despite the prevailing depression, he was warmly welcomed by the natives who were doubtless anticipating the bounty of gifts which the viceroy had dispatched. These Governor Terán duly distributed. He then formally declared the lands occupied by the Tejas tribes to constitute the Kingdom of Nueva Montaña de Santander y Santillana.

On August 24, having delivered to the friars the herds and supplies which had been brought for the missions, he set out to find the sea expedition which should have been long since anchored in the Espíritu Santo Bay.

Returning as they had come, the company halted on the Guadalupe, while Terán with a few men marched to the coast, and September 8 found the sea section of the expedition under Captain Gregorio Salinas de Varona. They had been on the shore of the bay since July 2; therefore, through negligence or incompetence, Martínez had failed to find them. Terán sent for the company on the Guadalupe and forwarded dispatches to the viceroy concerning the progress which had been made. Meantime the sailors were busy unloading the vessels. It cost eighteen days to take off the sup-

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plies and arms. However, on September 27, the force from the Guadalupe having arrived, the united expedition abandoned the camp which Terán had called Santa Margarita de Buena Vista — probably on the La Vaca River near the Espíritu Santo. He would now return to the missions with supplies.

October 1 brought them to the Colorado after a journey of twenty-nine leagues; but now they were to experience delays through unfavorable weather. The fall rains fell, swelling the streams and converting the black lowlands into impassable mud flats. It was October 26 when the united company arrived at the missions. Two months had passed, but the friars, it appears, had delayed their missionary efforts until the return of Terán. Meanwhile, however, they had ascertained that the Candadachos on the Neches and Red rivers were ready to receive missionaries.

After a ten days' rest at the San Francisco mission, Terán joined by the friars, started for the land of the Candadachos. November 6 was the date — a date which foretold failure. The winter season was approaching and, apart from the stubborn obstacles nature imposed to the progress of the party, the establishment of a mission at that season was inauspicious. The rains now descended in floods; the streams were rendered practically impassable; and the adventurers, who thus far had had an easy time of it, began to murmur. Food was no longer easily procured, and what with wet clothing and poor, jaded horses, disaster was close at hand.

Having crossed the San Miguel (Neches), the company headed for the country of the Caddos. Day by day they continued their march northward, now drenched with rain, now bridging streams, now building rafts for the purpose of crossing the company. Then the winter fell to increase their difficulties. Snow and ice came together, freezing the unacclimated Spaniards, while the already impoverished animals one by one dropped by the way. Soon the expedition

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was halted. Taking with him thirty men of whom Fray Massanet was one, and the strongest of the animals, Terán pushed on to explore the land in keeping with his instructions. He had not gone far when, on November 28, he paused upon the bank of the great river of the Caddos (Red River). Their way was this time blocked securely, but finding a canoe in a lagoon near the river, Terán set about making a superficial examination of the region. With several of his men, he floated down the stream some distance, making soundings and rough drawings of its course. On the ensuing day, in company with Fray Massanet, Terán crossed the stream, visiting the Indians in that vicinity, who manifested a lively interest in the coming of the missionaries.

But no friars were left. Terán, having done this much, now retraced his path to the camp where were the rest of the company; together they started on the return march. The weather had abated in no wise. Instead it increased in violence, sleet and snow covering the grass and the shrubs so that the poor animals weakened and dropped. To such an extent was this true that the soldiers were obliged to dismount, their horses being needed to transport the baggage. In such plight they reached Santa María the last day, but one, of the year. A few days later they moved on to San Francisco de los Tejas.

The failure of the expedition was foregone. The primary requirement of the viceroy had thus far been unfilled; nevertheless, Governor Terán manifested no enthusiasm for attempting the founding of missions. Together with his men he was eager to get out of the country; nor were the friars less eagerly disposed. Either the inhospitality of the climate or the desolation of the undertaking chilled their warm-hearted religious sympathies. But Fray Massanet, on the contrary, proved stubborn. He was for carrying out the instructions to the letter, and through the rights granted him by the viceroy he had a strong voice. He came at once into conflict

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with the soldiers and also with Terán, who had promised the soldiers on the return from the land of the Caddos that they should have fresh horses at the mission for their intended march to the coast. This Massanet vetoed, denying them also cattle upon which to subsist till they reached the land of buffalo. Thereupon came the rupture. Governor Terán gave the soldiers permission to take what they wanted. No longer was mission-founding an object with these adventurous explorers.

On January 9, 1692, loaded as lightly as possible, the entire company, save the missionaries and ten soldiers, headed southward for the gulf. But their road was well-nigh impassable. The heavy rains had converted even *arroyos* into rivers, and rivers into seas. For thirteen days they were unable to cross the Trinity, while the Brazos seemed to offer insuperable difficulties. At last, however, they managed to ferry it, only to be plunged into bottomless mud flats. At the Colorado happily they fell in with a relief party from the coast. A few days later, on March 5, they once more camped at Santa Margarita, whence they shipped in the schooner *Santo Christo* for Veracruz. March 24 was the date of sailing; on April 15 they anchored in the harbor of Veracruz, almost a year having elapsed since the expedition had quitted Coahuila.

There had remained behind, Fray Massanet with the friars and ten soldiers who continued the work already begun in Santa María and San Francisco. It appears altogether certain that there were no other establishments of this character in the land; if there were, as some have alleged, they were so ephemeral that even their names vanished. At these two missions, therefore, was centered the Spanish hold in both the political and spiritual fields of Texas. That hold was consequently precarious and was so regarded by Terán at the time of his departure. Things were going badly then; drought and disease had devastated both land and popula-



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tion. To add to the wretchedness of the situation, many of the cattle had died and those that survived were stolen by the Indians, some of whom came down from the north. Besides, the store of provisions was exhausted; the soldiers left as guards continued their excesses; while the credulous Indians, under the stress of their misfortunes, came to attribute their ill luck to the missionaries, to their having been baptized. The result could not be in doubt. The natives left the missions in bands, refusing to live in communities. Nor was this all; their distrust of the friars turned slowly into hatred. A conspiracy was hatched. The friars and soldiers were to be massacred. A neophyte revealed the plot to Fray Massanet.

The situation was desperate by the summer of 1693, when in June Captain Salinas came up from Coahuila with supplies. Fullness of the larder always acted as a great pacifier of the Indian; he accordingly felt once more his spiritual ardor equal to the temperature of the routine of *aves* and duties at the mission. But several of the Franciscans seized the opportunity to return to Mexico, joining Captain Salinas on his return. Massanet, for his part, wrote a long letter to the viceroy complaining of the situation, stating his imperative needs. One thing to be noted is the great change which had taken place in his thinking as to what method would best serve the purposes of the missionaries. Originally he had objected to the soldiers remaining at the mission. Now he petitioned to have a strong military force so that the Indians might be reduced to *pueblos* (communities.)

Upon examining the situation, the viceroy decided that until the Indians manifested a better disposition, the missions should be abandoned. An order to that effect was issued on August 21, 1693. Meantime the aggressiveness of the natives had become insupportable, and the command to withdraw from the Kingdom of Nueva Montaña y San-

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tillana — a term newly applied — was responded to with alacrity. Burying the bells and such property as was not portable, on the night of October 25 the friars set out for Coahuila.

In such a manner subsided the first wave in the Mission Period of Texas. Not a Spaniard, not a friar remained east of the Rio Grande.

It is pertinent at this point to inquire into the causes for the failure of the undertaking. The failure was charged by the friars to the soldiers, who by their licentious conduct outraged the natives, drove them to hate the white man with a bitter hate. The soldiers in turn drew up counter-charges against the friars. The truth is that natural causes — drought and plague, together with the isolation of the missions and want of an inexhaustible store of gifts — were largely, but not wholly, responsible for that unromantic ending. Unromantic as it was, it was also melancholic. The friars, their hopes blasted, slipped away in the dead of night from the place they had entered with high hopes — hopes, the realization of which meant the fulfillment of vows, the preaching of the Gospel to the heathen, the enlightening of the infidels, all to the glory of God. Was not their only aim the saving of souls?

But they were undismayed. They were indeed heroic men who planted the Cross in the wilderness of Texas. It may well be doubted that in this later age we have men of such courage.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Floodtide of the Mission Period

Hardly, however, were the Franciscans on the soil of Nueva España — tired from their hasty retreat from East Texas — before they began an agitation for a speedy reoccupation of the inhospitable land of the Tejas. They drew up a plan which was submitted to the viceroy; but on May 11, 1694, it was rejected by the authorities, with the declaration that for the present nothing would be undertaken. It was a blow to the Franciscans.

For several years they endeavored quietly to attain their end, without the slightest prospect of success. It required something more than the pressure of religious fervor to cause the Spanish government — whose existence was precarious due to European wars — to expend monies on Christianizing a race of infidels. Perhaps the modern spirit was already, although half unconsciously, influencing the acts of Courts. No longer were there Holy Lands to be reclaimed! A more



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potent cause was needed to move the viceroy to act than the prospect of saving a few souls. This fact the friars came, in the end, to realize.

A political reason had been an impelling force in the first entries, even in the step taken for the permanent occupation of the country. The presence of La Salle's colony on the Garcitas Creek had done more for the cause of the settlement of Texas than had the prayers of the friars. There was one friar who saw this with peculiar clearness — Fray Hidalgo who had worked with the Tejas Indians. And now that the French actually had occupied the mouth of the Mississippi, he hastened to write to the French governor of Louisiana, urging him to interfere in a real or assumed tribal dispute in the country of the Tejas.

The ruse failed, inasmuch as the governor did not avail himself of the information. But the idea of Fray Hidalgo was sound. The French had only to approach the bounds of Tejas — still known as the Kingdom of Nuevo Santander y Santillana — to set the Spaniards in a whirl of excitement. And this was now, after a score of years, to happen in spite of the fact that to all appearances the Spaniards had forgotten the existence of the empire lying to the east of the Rio Grande.

On September 14, 1712, Louis XIV granted by charter to Antony Crozat the whole of Louisiana. What Louisiana was, neither the *Grand Monarque*, nor Crozat, nor any other person could have told. All they knew was that a great river flowed down from Canada, where the French had settlements, to the Gulf of Mexico and that on either side spread away such wastes of wilderness as the world had never dreamed of. That was Louisiana!

It was not primarily to settle Louisiana that Crozat had acquired rights to this territory, but to exploit its wealth of furs and mines of which a superabundance were supposed to exist. Indeed, it was not wholly speculation, for French

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traders and adventurers over a number of years had explored the country, some of them pushing up the Red River to the country of the Tejas.

The most fascinating of all these adventurers was one Jucherau St. Denis. He was a Canadian, born in Montreal, and early came down the Mississippi to join in the movement to conquer all that region for France. By 1705 he became commander of San Juan, one of the posts on the Mississippi, some forty leagues west of Mobile. From this post St. Denis made several excursions into the wilderness to the west. He went among the Choctaws and then to the Nachitos who were neighbors of the Tejas (Asinais.) He lived for some months with the Tejas, learned their language and became a great favorite with them. Then in 1704 or 1705 he crossed the country to San Juan Bautista on the Rio Grande and returned safely.

In 1713, Cadillac, the governor of Louisiana, ordered him to visit the old Spanish missions for the ostensible purpose of purchasing livestock. The ensuing year, bent on a much more serious enterprise, St. Denis with a few soldiers marched into the country of the Tejas Indians, whose chief, Bernardino — none other than he whom Fray Massanet had met on the Guadalupe twenty-five years before — came forth to welcome them. Upon resuming his march to the West, St. Denis was joined by Chief Bernardino with a few warriors who continued with him in his journey across the country to San Juan Bautista.

It is at this point that the adventures of St. Denis begin to take on the color of romance. Kindly received by Captain Diego Ramón, commander of the post, the Frenchman was shortly made a prisoner and hurried off to the city of Mexico, which place he reached on June 15, 1715. He was suspected of being out in the interest of the French monarchy and that another attempt was being made to occupy the

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land of the Tejas, whereas it appears that St. Denis' primary purpose had been commercial. The plan was to open up relations with the Spaniards.

Indeed, for some years the French traders from Louisiana had been in touch with the Indians on the Sabine and Red rivers. They exchanged guns, knives and trinkets for salt, pelts and horses. The Spanish authorities were alarmed to find all these items in the possession of the Tejas and other neighboring tribes. So the first objective of government was to put an end to this clandestine trading. A *junta* issued orders to that effect, and in 1709 an expedition under Captain Aguirre was dispatched into the Tejas country for the purposes indicated. But nothing really came of it unless, indeed, it laid the ground for the reoccupation of Tejas a few years later.

Rumors of invasion, of illicit trading, kept running back and forth across the frontier. And such commerce did continue without interruption. Finally these reports led the viceroy to call a *junta general*. Considerable excitement was manifest, and a new expedition was ordered into the contested region. The crisis had been reached with St. Denis' frank statement about what was going on in the remote lands of the Tejas.

Whatever St. Denis' motive, the authorities of Mexico were alarmed for the safety of that part of His Majesty's dominions. The Duke of Linares, the viceroy, ordered an expedition to be prepared for the reoccupation of the country. It was to go under the command of Captain Domingo Ramón; and St. Denis, who had been released, was to act as guide. Everywhere St. Denis had won the hearts of the Indians as he had won hearts in every quarter.

The company under Ramón consisted of twenty-five soldiers, ten friars and three laymen. There were five friars from the college of Querétaro — Gabriel de Vergara, Benito

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Sanchez, Francisco Hidalgo, Manuel Castellanos, Pedro Perez de Mezquia. These were under the leadership of Padre Isidro Felix Espinosa. There were three friars from the college of Zacatecas under Padre Antonio Margil de Jesús. They were: Matías Saenz de San Antonio, Pedro de Mendoza and Agustín Patrón.

In preparation for the expedition, Captain Ramón listed the following: goods could be bought for 5,000 *pesos*; horses for 6,500 *pesos*; salaries for twenty-five soldiers at 450 *pesos* per annum (11,250 *pesos*); gifts 2,277 *pesos*. Singularly enough, there were included silk hose and shoes for women, ribbons and laces — even silk hose for men, as well as pocket knives, axes, saws, yokes for oxen, tools for the farm and seeds of various sort. It was obvious that these expeditions were not looked upon as child's play. They were regarded seriously. One of the curious things in connection with the enterprise was the appointment of St. Denis as second in command.

The expedition left Saltillo in February, 1716, where Ramón had recruited most of the soldiers he was to take along. There also the padres spent ten days in collecting alms.

At the head of the friars was Father Isidro Felix de Espinosa, president of the Franciscans from the College of La Santa Cruz of Querétaro. But of all the padres, the most revered was Fray Hidalgo, who had lived with the Tejas for more than three years — and was much beloved by them.

Upon reaching San Juan Bautista, St. Denis was married to the niece of Captain Domingo Ramón. After a few days in which to celebrate the occasion, on about April 24 the party left San Juan Bautista.

There were in the expedition between eighty and ninety persons. They had with them 64 oxen, 490 horses and mules and more than 1,000 goats and sheep. The luggage and supplies and gifts for the Indians was no small item for the



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transport.

On April 20 they crossed the Rio Grande; on May 2 they reached the Nueces River; on May 7 the Frio; and the Hondo on May 9. They were now forty-eight leagues from the Rio Grande. On May 14 the expedition reached the San Pedro Springs and the San Antonio River, Ramón and Espinosa agreeing upon the desirability of the spot for a settlement.

On May 23 the cavalcade reached the Colorado River near the present site of Austin. The river was in flood. In order to gain a partial picture of the difficulties to be overcome, the stressful struggle involved in conducting an expedition across the wilderness, we here quote from Castañeda's *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, Vol. II, pp. 51-54:

Unable to find a suitable crossing after exploring its course for four leagues, they camped on its bank. The river subsided about four spans during the night, in spite of a severe thunderstorm, and preparations were made to pass over it ~~without~~ delay. Seven Masses were said, one by each missionary to his own patron saint, invoking divine assistance, while everything was made ready to transfer the baggage and supplies. Before night, the greater part of the expedition found itself safely on the opposite bank. One of the missionaries, Father Manuel Castellanos, almost drowned, however, when his horse was swept off the passageway. . . . The following day all the goats and sheep were taken across without mishap and the expedition was ready once more to proceed on its march to the Tejas. But it was decided to spend another day here while scouts were sent ahead to reconnoiter the road, which was not well known from this point on. For this purpose Alferez Diego Ramón and two soldiers were sent out.

With the information obtained the party now went on and killed on that day, May 27, their first buffalo, and found the meat very much to their liking. The next day, they camped on a stream which they named Las Animas, present day Brushy Creek. Again new explorations were undertaken to determine the best route, and while engaged in

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this work, the tracks of five Indians were discovered. A party was immediately sent after them and two braves were brought before Ramón, one Yerbipiamé and one Mescal. They told the leader of the expedition that their *rancherías* were in the vicinity and that they would be glad to act as guides. Forced to continue the march because of the unsuitable location of the camp, the expedition moved with much labor on May 31, and the missionaries went on "with keen regret since this was the Feast of Pentecost." That night it rained and at dawn the next morning it was still raining. With much difficulty four Masses were said "in which we besought Our Lord to grant us favorable weather." The day cleared by nine and the party marched as far as the San Gabriel River and there stopped next day to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, being the third day of the octave. A solemn Mass and the *Veni Creator* were sung by all the missionaries, a military salute was fired, and Communion was received by many persons.

From June 3 to June 12, the members of the expedition experienced much trouble in finding their way through the woods and across the numerous streams in their path. They were forced to change their course several times from northeast to southeast. On June 7, they were completely at a loss to trace their course, but on the 12th they came upon a delegation of about forty Indians of various nations, four chiefs among them, who led them to their *ranchería*, where a large *jacal* had been prepared for their reception. One of the chiefs, who had the largest number of followers turned out to be a Yerbipiamé who knew Ramón. This Indian had led thieving expeditions to the presidio on the Rio Grande many years ago. The natives all showed unmistakable signs of joy and welcomed the Spaniards gladly to their *ranchería*. With well studied tact, Ramón placed his camp about a rifle's shot from the Indian village. He then went to the bower made of leafy branches for his reception. There, about two thousand Indians, men, women and children, some apostates and others who had never been baptized, came and kissed the hand of Ramón and the missionaries. The rest of the day and all of the 13th, were spent in carrying on a lively trade with the Indians, who appeared very good-natured and genuinely pleased with the coming of the Spaniards. It was the Indians who requested Ramón to halt for a day to trade

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and rest. Ramón warned all the soldiers and members of the expedition to be fair in their dealings with the Indians so that these savages might not get the wrong impression of the Spaniards. The Indians had buffalo and deer skins which they exchanged freely for the things the soldiers had to give them.

That day was also the Feast of St. Anthony of Padua, and the missionaries took occasion to celebrate it with a high Mass, offered for the success of the expedition. During the celebration, the soldiers fired a salute and the numerous Indians were deeply impressed with the ceremony. A feeling of good comradeship prevailed throughout the day, even the dogs of the Indians jumped "among the goats to have sport with the kids." The Indians ate heartily of the food that was given them and the other delicacies for which they traded their skins.

The following day the main stream of the Brazos, which they called Rio de la Trinidad, was reached, but finding it impassible [sic] on account of the high water, only smaller stock was that day transferred to the opposite bank. "Sixty Indians took the goats across, one by one, for which (service I ordered) two goats and an ox killed for them," says Ramón. Just a short distance beyond this point, not more than a league, the expedition came upon the second branch of the river which, although not so wide, was found to be deep. It became necessary to make barges, but these were quickly built with the help of the numerous Indians that now accompanied the party. Ramón states that "the Indians were delayed (in their work) a short while, by an alligator that seemed ready to swallow one of them, a common occurrence, for which the natives fear the reptile very much. I relieved this anxiety by shooting the alligator through the eye, as this is the only vulnerable spot. The Indians were greatly impressed with my marksmanship." By the 18th the expedition reached a small stream which was named Corpus Christi. There the group met four Tejas Indians and two women, buffalo hunters, who expressed great joy at seeing the Spaniards and threw their arms around them. The happiness of these inhabitants became even greater when they were told that the strangers were coming to stay permanently among them. Some of the Indians now accompanied the expedition as guides, and on the 20th, they came to a small Indian

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village where a number of Tejas were found. They all evinced the same demonstration of joy and gave the newcomers green ears of corn and watermelon. Taking up their march again, on June 22, they reached the present Trinity River, which they called Rio de San Juan Bautista, and about a league beyond they came upon a creek so deep that a bridge had to be built across it. Here they camped on the 24th to celebrate the Feast of St. John. Six low Masses and one high Mass were said: some persons received Communion; and that evening the soldiers amused themselves by holding horse races, during which each one bet on his particular horse.

The expedition finally reached the Asinais, which included a number of tribes—a confederacy—the Tejas among them. They spoke a common tongue. On June 26 the Indians came into the camp, and a great ceremony was had. Two days later an even greater assemblage took place, and the peace pipe was brought out. It was adorned with white feathers from one end of the stem to the other—the stem being more than three feet in length.

The smoking of the peace pipe was an event. The chiefs smoked first. “The first puff of smoke was blown to the sky, the second to the East, the third to the West, the fourth to the North, the fifth to the South, and the sixth to the ground, that being the sign of lasting peace.”

When the chiefs had finished, the pipe was passed to Captain Ramón and then on to every man and woman. Two days later a site was chosen for the new mission of San Francisco de los Tejas. It was four leagues east of the old one. It was in the midst of the Neches village. On July 5 Mission San Francisco de los Tejas was dedicated. It was placed in charge of Fray Isidro Felix de Espinosa, who assigned it to Fray Hidalgo—he who had been praying for more than a score of years to be returned to his beloved Tejas. Fray Castellanos was associated with Hidalgo.

About eight leagues to the northeast of this mission, La



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Purísima Concepción de Acuña was planted. On July 7 this was placed under Fray Gabriel Vergara.

The third mission to be established by Ramón was Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe for the Nacogdoches and about nine leagues east of Mission Concepción. It was under Fray Margil de Jesús.

The fourth mission, San José, was planted among the Nazoni, about sixteen miles southeast of Concepción. Fray Benito Sanchez had it in charge.

Thus was planted the last of the four missions authorized for East Texas. In each case there was a great ceremony accompanying the opening. The buildings were rude structures, made of hewn pine trees and covered with grass. But they served their purpose. However, the Indians made it clear that they would not congregate about the missions until their crops were harvested. It is interesting to note that green corn, watermelons, cantaloupes and peaches were brought in to the Spaniards.

But almost as soon as the four missions were planted and houses built for the friars and soldiers, it became plain to Ramón and the friars that they occupied a perilous position. On July 22 they wrote a long letter to the viceroy. There they were three hundred leagues from the nearest post in New Spain, surrounded by four or five thousand Indians (the tribes of the Asinai) with enemy Apaches to the north and enemy Karankawas to the south. How could they hope to survive! They needed twenty-five more soldiers and their pay to be fixed at four hundred and fifty *pesos* per annum. With their present force of twenty-five men, they could not explore the country nor protect the horses and cattle—hardly look after the missions. And supplies were hard to get. It cost fifteen cents to bring a pound of sugar from Saltillo. Above all, however, it was pointed out that at least six thousands *pesos* a year were needed to buy presents for

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the Indians. And presents, they pointed out, were an absolute necessity if the tribes were to be kept friendly.

Then slyly Ramón referred to the loyalty of St. Denis; but he had noticed among the Indians a score of guns, a variety of beads, knives, and so on—all of which had been got from the French through barter. The French were only sixty leagues away on the road to Mobile.

Ramón, with Fray Margil de Jesús, went over to the French front and found a post not far from Natchitoches. They then went to see the Adaes, some eight leagues away; there in October, 1716, they established the Mission of San Miguel de Linares. A little later Mission Nuestra Señora de los Dolores was founded among the Ais a few leagues from Mission Dolores. Fray Margil was placed in charge.

The fall went by, and the friars complained that the Indians living on their *ranchos* would not come to the missions. They were busy with their crops of pumpkins and corn and were out hunting. Then bitterly they complained of the fact that the Indians had three temples where perpetual fires were kept burning. They ought to be destroyed, wrote one of the friars, but fear of the Indians restrained them.

To add to the difficulties of the settlements, sickness fell upon soldiers and friars. Handicapped as they were, with gifts running low and no support in prospect, East Texas faced the winter demoralized and threatened with defeat.

Discouraged and distressed about the missions, in the late fall of 1716 Fray Olivares was sent to Mexico to report on the conditions prevailing in Texas. This report was made to the new viceroy, Marques de Valero, who had succeeded Linares. Olivares told how the French were encroaching on the East, how they were suborning the Indians through presents and through promises. He also reported on what a marvelous country Texas was with its wild grapes and fruits and nuts (the pecan) and fertility of the soil. He

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did not fail to mention droves of wild turkeys, birds of various kinds, deer and herds of buffalo. It was a marvelous new world, and with proper support from the viceroy it could be held for Spain, and in the operation the souls of at least forty-five tribes of Indians could be saved.

He declared that there were now six missions among the Asinai, and about them there were some four or five thousand Indians. These were tractable and were ready to give themselves up to the Catholic faith. What Olivares proposed now was to build additional missions and presidios among those Indians whom they had thus far not contacted. He wanted to build a mission and presidio on the San Antonio River, about halfway between East Texas and the settlements in Mexico. He also urged the building of a presidio and mission on the Espíritu Santo Bay. This would enable the friars to bring in supplies by sea from Veracruz. This would short-cut the time and expense, not to mention the hazard of bringing in goods overland due to the depredations of the Apaches.

It was noticeable that neither Ramón nor Olivares stressed the French interest in the eastern country; but they did point out that trading activities were being pushed by them, and they reasoned that this might lead to an extension of French influence in that quarter.

Indeed, in June, 1717, St. Denis who had gone out with Ramón to the East, had returned to Louisiana and once more began to trade with the Texas Indians — but his goods were confiscated on the Rio Grande by the Spaniards, and he hurried to Mexico City to protest. This remarkable man was to continue for years to be a disquieting factor in that controverted region.

The appeal of Olivares bore fruit. Martín de Alarcón was named to head an expedition with instructions to establish Mission San Antonio de Valero on the San Antonio

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River. For eight long years Olivares had struggled to bring this about. Alarcón was named by the viceroy to be Captain-General and Governor of the Province of the Tejas.

Once the decision had been made to plant a mission on the San Antonio River, Fray Olivares left a memorandum as to the things required to support the new establishment. The list contained cows, sheep and goats, and agricultural implements, tools for carpenters, masons, and all the necessary articles for conducting the services of the Church. One thing stipulated was a portrait of St. Francis to be at least six feet tall.

Fray Olivares quit Mexico City and reached Saltillo in June. He hurried on to the Rio Grande, but there, being denied support of a guard to protect him across the country to San Antonio, he was forced to await the arrival of Governor Alarcón who did not come up until August.

At the presidio of San Juan Bautista, Alarcón took over the governorship of Coahuila, but he was alarmed at finding French traders in the town. They fled, however, on his approach. He was now convinced that the alliance between St. Denis and the Ramón family was working dangerously for the Spanish interests.

As soon as Alarcón reached San Juan Bautista, Fray Olivares pressed upon him the necessity of going ahead with the expedition. It can well be imagined that the friar was a little out of humor after having waited three months for Alarcón to catch up with him. But the governor was in no hurry. He found one excuse after another to postpone the advance across the Rio Grande. He procrastinated for eight months in Coahuila, and this delay brought on a serious conflict between the friar and the governor. It was not until March, 1718, that Alarcón was ready to set out from San Juan Bautista.

On April 9 he crossed the Rio Grande and headed in the direction of Espíritu Santo; but presently he changed



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his course and on April 25 reached the site proposed for the presidio and mission at San Antonio. On May 5 Alarcón took possession of the site which was to become the *Villa de Bejar*. The royal flag was flung to the winds, Mass was celebrated by the chaplain, and the Mission of San Antonio de Valero was founded. Five days later the foundations were laid for the presidio of the *Villa de Bejar*, which was to grow into the modern city of San Antonio.

The conflict between Alarcón and Olivares waxed hotter and hotter. Alarcón was said to have declared when the Indians failed to congregate about the mission that he would go after them and put them all to the sword. When this news reached the natives, it can well be imagined that none would put in his appearance. Olivares believed this threat had been made, and Alarcón had one more charge laid against him.

The governor at length advanced into the east. His primary objective had been to succor the new missions on the Neches and the Sabine. He took with him supplies, but they were inadequate. Forthwith the friars railed. They complained to the viceroy that the promised soldiers — they had asked for fifty married ones — were few and of the most vicious class in Nueva España; while the artisans who were to have been brought out for the purpose of instructing the natives failed altogether to appear. So the clamor for aid was kept up by the Franciscans who now accused Governor Alarcón of the non-fulfillment of his instructions. Alarcón at this point supported the complaints of the friars, asking for assistance from the viceroy who forthwith refused to meet the demands.

In the meantime the famous correspondence between Alarcón and La Harpe, the French representative in Louisiana, relative to the possession of the territory in the Tejas, had taken place. This was the second stage in a dispute which

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was to extend over a century, reaching a final treaty settlement (Adams and Onís) in 1819, but finding its ultimate solution in the Texas Revolution and the Mexican War of 1848.

After that sharp conflict of words between Alarcón and La Harpe had calmed, there followed quiet, unbroken save by complaints and petitions of the friars. Then suddenly there came a change in the situation. War having been declared between France and Spain, their representatives in America could but take up the quarrel. The offensive was duly taken by the French who had advanced up the Red River and pressed on the Spanish settlements at Pilar. A band of seven Frenchmen from Natchitoches without warning fell upon Mission San Miguel and captured a lay brother. One escaped to carry the news that France and Spain were at war. Very soon rumors spread of a French army approaching; thereupon the Spanish soldiers and friars in panic beat a retreat. They halted on the Trinity for three months, awaiting reinforcements, but none arrived. So they continued their westward march until they reached the settlement of San Antonio.

The French band made no effort to pursue the Spaniards. It was unnecessary. The province to the east of San Antonio de Bejar was abandoned to the French, who seemed careless enough of it. They destroyed the missions but attempted no settlement wherewith to hold the country. However, in the spring of 1721 they dispatched an expedition into Espíritu Santo region with a view to making a settlement, but the hostility of the Indians in that quarter convinced them of the fruitlessness of such a proceeding.

In the meantime the soldiers and friars, who had returned from the missions in the east to San Antonio de Bejar, were waiting for reinforcements from Mexico. They were, however, not wholly idle. In 1720 they established

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on the San Antonio River about six miles below the village a mission called San José de Aguayo — a mission which still stands a monument to their zeal.

The news of the French invasion of Texas having alarmed the viceroy, an army more considerable than any which had thus far crossed the Rio Grande was collected for the express purpose of expelling the French. Five hundred men were gathered under the command of Marques de San Miguel de Aguayo. In November, 1720, he left Monclova in the province of Coahuila; but through delay, partly due to high water, he reached San Antonio in February. From that place on March 10 he sent a detachment of forty men to occupy Espíritu Santo, still fearful of the French threat to take possession of it.

Not until May 13 did Aguayo resume his march for the Neches. He was eagerly joined by the friars who had been driven from their posts by the French in that fabulous raid of seven men. Chiefly because of flood waters in the rivers, it was late in July when the expedition reached its destination in the country of the Asinais' confederation.

The Indians were jubilant over the return of the Franciscans. Celebrations were held at each mission on the resumption of services. Before the end of August they had all been re-established. And once more the Tejas land was occupied — having been twice abandoned.

Soon after the arrival of the Spaniards, Aguayo met St. Denis, who had returned to his own people in Louisiana. No opposition was offered by the French to the reoccupation of the country.

The presidio of Tejas again was garrisoned. The friars who had come back to their charges were rejoiced, for the natives appeared friendlier than ever, having, as Bancroft said, "an undiminished capacity for receiving gifts."

In order to strengthen their position in the east, the

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Spaniards now in turn crossed the Sabine and erected a presidio which they called Pilar within seven leagues of the French camp at Natchitoches. One hundred men were left in garrison, and the French, not being in sufficient force to oppose this so-called aggression, could only protest. Not only was the possession of the land of the Tejas contested, but the eastern boundary of that region was at this date an open question.

Early in 1722 Marques de Aguayo, who had returned to San Antonio de Bexar, set out for the Espíritu Santo and on the ruins of La Salle's fort, in defiance of the French claim, built a presidio. It was named Santa María de Loreto de la Bahía del Espíritu Santo. Ninety men were left in garrison; and as if further to secure the region, a mission was planted nearby and dedicated Espíritu Santo de Zuñiga. It was administered by Padre Patrón and had a notable history. Its original site was on the Garcitas Creek, a few miles from the fort; but in 1726 the Indians killed Captain Ramón of the presidio and deserted the mission. The next year the friars, still at the abandoned mission, expressed themselves as eager to convert the Haranames and the Haramas [Jaranames?] who were up some leagues from the coast on the Guadalupe. So the probabilities are that the mission was moved in 1727 from the Espíritu Santo to the Guadalupe. But the attempt to convert the Haranames evidently proved abortive, for a little later these Indians are enumerated among the enemies of the Spaniards and as apostates of Mission Espíritu Santo. The Haranames had fled and joined the hostile tribes in the north, whom they led back on raiding expeditions which were usually successful because of their knowledge of the country.

To return to the eastern missions, of the six, none of them could be said to have prospered. By 1727, of the three missions which had fallen to the lot of the Zacatecan friars, San Miguel had not an Indian; Nuestra Señora de los Dolores



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had only a small party, and they were *gentiles* (unconverted). Guadalupe had a good many natives, but they too were *gentiles*, although tractable and well-disposed. The missions of the Queréteran friars — Nuestra Señora de la Concepción, San José and San Francisco de los Tejas — had not an Indian; what was more desperate, the Franciscans had little hope of collecting any of them, according to Bonilla in his *Compendio*.

As the three establishments administered by the Queréterians were accomplishing nothing, the friars sought to remove them to more inviting fields. An official was sent to search out such a place. It had been suggested that they be removed to the San Marcos (Colorado), but because of the difficulties to be overcome in getting outwater for the fields, the officer reported in favor of transferring them to the San Antonio River. The three missions were accordingly moved to the San Antonio where, on March 5, 1731, they were formally consecrated. The presidio of Tejas, which had stood guard over these Christian establishments, was suppressed as of no further use. The garrison of Presidio Pilar was reduced to seventy; La Bahía to forty; and San Antonio to forty-three. Fear of French encroachments was becoming less and less potent.

The missions, which were thus officially transferred from the east and placed under the protection of the presidio of Bejar, now embarked on a new lease of life. However, only Concepción retained its name. San José, so known on the Neches, became — because of the existence of a mission by that name on the San Antonio — San Juan Capistrano, while San Francisco de los Tejas, the oldest mission in the province, was dedicated to San Francisco de la Espada. It may be interesting at this point to note the location of these new establishments in regard to the presidio of San Antonio de Bejar and the missions Alamo and San José. Concepción was planted between the Alamo and San

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José, which owed its origin to the friars who had been expelled from the east by the French; San Juan Capistrano was some miles below San José, while San Francisco de la Espada was lower still on the river.

Various tribes of Indians accompanied the Franciscans to their new home. Of these the chief were: Pajalacs, Pitalacs, Pacaos, Benados and Tolujacs. They numbered — men, women and children — near a thousand souls. They were distributed among the missions as follows: the Pajalacs and Pitalacs congregated about Concepción; the Pacaos about Espada; the Benados and Tolujacs about San Juan Capistrano.

There may seem here an irreconcilable conflict: In the year 1727, according to Bonilla in his *Compendio*, these three missions had no Indians, but now in 1731 the three had perhaps a thousand. The explanation lies in the fact that the movements of the Indians were very uncertain and that in the intervening four years some had settled about the missions, while the far greater number had not been attached to them but went along with a view simply to profit by the move, either in winning gifts from the padres or in appropriating the spoils of the country.

Fray Gabriel de Vergara was president of these missions and in charge of Concepción. Friars José Urtado and Pedro Muñoz were the custodians of San Juan and Espada respectively.

Buildings were begun at once, and to each of these new establishments was assigned twenty-four *sitios* of land because of the large number of Indians attached to them. Nine soldiers were detailed from La Bahía (three for each mission) to remain for two years, at the end of which time it was thought the Indians would have become entirely subdued and inured to the labor of the fields.

It may be interesting to note that forty years after the coming of these religious houses, a petition was directed to

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the governor of Texas, Baron de Ripperdá, protesting against the missions' retaining all the land originally assigned them. The reason alleged was that the number of Indians no longer warranted so liberal a distribution. Instead of one thousand natives, there were now scarcely one hundred and twenty in the three establishments. The petition asserted that if the friars had their way, they would usurp the land of the village and force it to move.

At this point let us turn to the three remaining missions in the east — Dolores, Miguel and Guadalupe — which were under the spiritual guidance of the Zacatecan friars. It was remarked above that at the time of the transfer of the three missions — San Francisco, San José and Concepción — from the east to the San Antonio, the other missions in that quarter were in little better condition. There were, in truth, a few Indians about each of the religious centers, but so far as civilizing the aborigines is concerned, the result was not impressive. The establishments, however, continued to struggle with the recalcitrant bands of savages under the protection of Presidio Pilar.

Not long after the removal of the missions from the Neches country, Governor Sandoval — who had been accused of permitting the French to make aggressions in the east — was succeeded by Don Carlos Benítez Franquis. He was to prove most arbitrary and headstrong, not hesitating to attack the missions. In a very short time, for reasons unknown, he expelled several of the friars and made certain regulations which interfered with the routine of the missions. Charges were speedily made against him by the friars to the effect that he had taken the neophytes of the mission and employed them to his own profit — strange echo from charges made against certain officers of the U.S.A. in the Year of Our Lord, 1949.

Very likely because of the charges brought by the friars against Franquis, he was replaced in the governorship by

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Joachim de Orobio Bástera who, in turn, gave over the office in 1741 to Tomas Felipe Wintuisen. Bástera, in his report made at that time of the conditions of the province of Tejas, speaks of the three missions in the east under the protection of Pilar. The Ais were then gathered about Dolores; the Adaes about San Miguel; the Nacogdoches about Guadalupe. The friars at the missions, he said, complained that the Indians, because of the hardness of their hearts, came no longer to the churches. He went on to elaborate a suggestion made by the missionaries to the effect that the natives ought to be brought to the missions, if necessary, by the aid of troops. But the application of this proposal was impossible because of the small number of soldiers, there being but two or three at each of the establishments. Here indeed was a subject which had been fully considered and tried out with little success. In the nature of things, it could not be made to work.

The friars, tired of the incessant worries and struggles incident to their labors, not only complained but offered suggestions for the betterment of their work. Encouraged by favorable reports from the missions which had been transplanted to the San Antonio, they proposed that their missions likewise be moved to that place.

Of Wintuisen's stewardship we know nothing. He was succeeded by Justo Boneo who died in 1745. The next governor was named Juan García Larios who, in the year mentioned, filed a lengthy report concerning the state of the province. Among other things he set forth — the Indians in the east refused to settle about the missions, acknowledging, however, that they were peaceable and committed no robberies. The one complaint he had to make was that they held illicit trade relations with the French on the border of Louisiana. In the month of December, 1745, another report was filed. Joachim de Orobio Bástera — it does not appear in what capacity — rendered an account of the con-



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ditions of trade on the frontier as well as on the settlement of some French traders on the coast. He showed conclusively that already a brisk intercourse had sprung up between the French and the Indians, over whom the Spaniards claimed authority, and that laws were violated even by the friars. We learn further from this report that Fray José de Calahorra, afterward distinguished as the peace messenger to the northern Indians, was in charge of Mission Guadalupe.

Difficult and desperate as had been the labors of the friars, the missionary spirit was still strong in the colleges of Zacatecas and Querétaro. Thus one need not be surprised to find at this period of depression and general dissatisfaction with things that a third wave of mission-founding was heading toward the shores of the province of Texas.

## CHAPTER FOUR

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### The Struggle Goes On

**I** At this point a brief survey of the province of Tejas is indicated. In the year 1747 there were nine distinct missions in the region known as Texas. They were distributed as follows: Dolores, San Miguel and Guadalupe in the east in the valleys of the Sabine and Neches; Alamo (Valero), Concepción, San José, San Juan, San Francisco de la Espada on the San Antonio River near the presidio of Bejar, and Espíritu Santo some distance below on the stream. Espíritu Santo, it will be recalled, had first been established under the protection of La Bahía, having been moved thence to Guadalupe, to rest finally on the San Antonio River where it became the nucleus for the town of modern Goliad. Thus the whole region was naturally divided into two divisions — an eastern and a western.

But this division was to be supplemented. In 1747 the

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Franciscans once more crossed the Rio Grande and during the next fifteen years founded six distinct missions. They were: Candelaria, Xavier, San Ildefonso, San Sabá, San Lorenzo and Nuestra Señora de la Luz.

The first three in the list were planted in 1747 on the San Xavier River, a small stream flowing eastward into the Brazos. According to the friars, they were established at the earnest request of a number of Indian tribes, the most prominent being: the Vidais, Cocos, Sacopseles and Anchosos. It had been determined by the religious authorities as early as 1744 to act favorably on the petition; but a long and bitter controversy arose as to where they should be located. Finally, on February 1, 1747, Conde Revilla Gigedo, viceroy, resolved to plant them on the San Xavier River and ordered that they should be protected by a garrison of twenty-four soldiers, seventeen of whom were to be drawn from the post of Pilar, seven from La Bahía, the presidio originally erected on the ruins of La Salle's fort. The expense of the undertaking was estimated by the viceroy at 16,000 *pesos*.

The friars, however, were ill pleased with the arrangements. They asked to have a fort, a presidio, with eighty or ninety in garrison; but the plan was opposed by the auditor Altamira. In 1749 the request for a presidio was granted by the viceroy only to be rescinded on the strength of other representations. Besides the fort, the friars wished the three missions to have distributed among them fifty soldiers drawn from the presidios of Pilar, La Bahía, San Juan Bautista and Santa Rosa del Sacramento—the two latter being in Mexico.

In order better to study the situation, a commissioner, José de Ecay Musquiz, was appointed by the government to repair to the scene. He rendered his account on March 16, 1751, to the Council of War and Finance, recommending that a force of fifty men was sufficient for all purposes of the

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missions. Thus ended a controversy which had dragged over six years.

In 1751 Lieutenant-Colonel Jacinto de Barrios y Jáuregui became governor of Texas. He conferred the captaincy of the fort protecting the three missions on Felipe de Rábago y Terán. When the latter reached his destination in 1751 he wrote that there was no water, that the soil was barren, and that there were no materials for buildings; that Mission San Ildefonso was deserted; that Mission Candelaria had but twenty-five persons of both sexes; and that San Xavier had but one hundred and nine. He proposed that the three should be united into one and that one moved to the San Marcos (Colorado).

This report of the captain aroused the indignation of the friars who already had made complaints against him because of lax methods. He permitted the soldiers the utmost license in their conduct toward the natives, and the old crimes which had caused the first disorders in the east here again demoralized the community, even neutralized all the good work of the friars. The president of the missions, Fray Miguel Pinilla, after vainly exhorting and admonishing the soldiers and officers to change their course of conduct, excommunicated them all. But this weapon likewise proved of no avail — troubles only multiplied. Even the neophytes were corrupted by the soldiers. Nothing was left undone to thwart the Franciscans.

One can only speculate on what would have happened to the missions had the friars had their way. But at every turn they were opposed by the political authorities or were baffled by the conduct of the soldiers — too many of whom were of the criminal class and had no respect for decency and right living — their debauchery nullifying the labors of the missionaries. The Indians resented the outrages upon their women — and often fled to put an end to them — even though they were not supposed to have developed any stand-



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ards of morals nor to have any religion save a species of fetish worship. In another sense, the conduct of the soldiers betrayed how weak is the race of man!

The climax of the troubles at the Xavier missions came with the murders of friars Ganzábal and Ceballos. The crime was committed on May 13, 1753. Thoribio Urrutia, captain of the presidio of Bexar, says that when three days later the news reached his post, he was in the country of Fray José Pinilla, president of the Xavier missions. He says that he immediately suspected an Indian named Andrés, who had reached San Juan the night previous. He had him arrested.

The following is the substance of his tale: Andrés confessed that he had shot Fray Ganzábal with an arrow, and that Martín Gutiérrez, a soldier of Xavier, had killed Fray José Saens de Zeballos (Ceballos) with a slingshot. He, Andrés, had received a horse and a few things as a reward for his part in the bloody affair. He told how he and Gutiérrez had found the two friars at Mission Candelaria; how the soldier had struck down the defenseless father, and how he himself had shot an arrow into the left side of Fray Ganzábal. There were, however, other conspirators among the soldiers. One Carillo and one Tomás were present at the double murder, while a certain José Atarín had been seen in company with them, lying in ambush for Father Pinilla. But the latter failed to pass and thus escaped a dastard fate.

Further interrogations developed the fact that the captain of the Xavier post, Rábago y Terán, was in the secret — had indeed instigated the murder. He had said to Andrés that he should do as he pleased, that he should come to him for powder and ball. Terán had told the Indians that the friars were poor and that they should come to him who had many fine things. It developed that Andrés was of the Coco tribe, all of whom had abandoned Candelaria.

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A few days later Fray Miguel Pinilla reached San Antonio de Bexar, reporting that his life had been threatened. Other facts were developed, and the burden of the whole matter was sent to Governor Barrios who ordered the arrest of Tomás, Atarín and Captain Terán. These were brought to trial at San Antonio. It was proved clearly that the captain was the instigator, and the guilty ones were those denounced by Andrés, the Coco Indian. Terán attempted a defense, asserting that the Coco Indian did the deed on his own account. But Terán's guilt was established beyond question. To secure his punishment, however, was no easy task, and the case dragged on for years; as late as 1757 it was unsettled. On that date Thoribio Urrutia received orders from the viceroy to send Captain Felipe Rábago y Terán and his associates under heavy guard to San Juan Bautista on the Rio Grande. But Urrutia at that time could ill afford to lose from his garrison such a detachment, so twelve men from the villa of San Fernando (San Antonio), which had been organized in 1731, volunteered their services. But there, for us, the matter ends.

In the meantime Don Pedro de Rábago had succeeded to the command of the Xavier presidio and had conciliated the friars, having taken the necessary steps to correct the glaring abuses.

It was at this time that the president of the missions proposed a radical change in the system which had been adopted in the government of the missions. The presidios were to be abolished, the necessary guard being supplied from the volunteer soldiers who were to marry and settle around the missions. The temporalities were to be put in charge of a government official. Had this program been carried out, it would have wrought a complete change in mission affairs. In the first place, the grievances of the Indians would have been abated; the friars would have been free from intermeddling officers; and possibly the married soldiers would

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have furnished the nucleus for a village where the Indians might more successfully have been colonized.

It was while things were in this unsettled state that Padre Mariano de los Dolores — one of the prime movers in the founding of the Xavier missions — in response to solicitations from the Apaches, advocated the removal of the Presidio de Bexar to their country. Nothing, however, came of it. But Fray Dolores had better luck when he attributed the failure of the missions to the violent deaths of Frays Ganzábal and Ceballos. Luckily, too, for his story, the streams dried up; the plagues came; and other manifestations of heaven's wrath lay heavily on the land. This, the clever father argued, clearly followed from the sacrilegious murders. So now a move was planned.

As in every previous instance, when it was resolved to transfer a mission, many places were suggested for its destination; but the Apaches, still manifesting a desire to have a mission, inclined the authorities to favor an establishment among them. The Franciscans thought the Apaches could be gathered together on the San Sabá which lay on the San Xavier to the northwest of their present position.

Apachería was the vague but sonorous name applied to all that region to the north of the Spanish settlements which was inhabited by the Apaches (Lipans) and kindred tribes. The friars insisted that the new presidio which was to be set up should contain a garrison of 100 men. The religious men of the Xavier establishment, together with the faithful neophytes, were to be transferred to the missions on the San Antonio River. It was further urged that the royal treasury would not be put to any great expense inasmuch as the Xavier missions had not used up all their endowment.

As the Apaches were the terror of New Mexico, Coahuila, even extending their raids to Nuevo León, it was emphasized that the San Sabá, being near the heart of the

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enemy's country, was the logical place for the presidio. A general peace then could be concluded. These various reasons convinced the Council of War and Finance of the advisability of the plan. On May 20, 1756, orders were given that the Presidio of Xavier should be moved to the San Sabá and garrisoned by one hundred men, including officers. Since Don Pedro de Rábago, who had succeeded the criminal Captain Terán, had died, the command of so important an expedition was entrusted to Don Diego Ortiz Parilla. He was ordered to recruit twenty-seven men, to take twenty-two from the presidio of Bexar; these sums, added to the garrison of Xavier, would make up the requisite number.

### II

So the missions on the San Xavier were abandoned, and the faithful followers among the natives were transported to San Antonio.

The ornaments of the churches and the bells had been conveyed to the missions there, for Governor Muñoz wrote (1793) to the president of the Missions, Friar José López, with regard to the same. It was suggested that some of them be transferred to Refugio, which was appealing for bells, being newly established.

And here is a hasty glance at the net result of the struggle which had been carried on in the region of San Xavier. There were never more than three hundred neophytes in the missions at any one time; but during the period of their existence four hundred and forty-four Indians received the sacrament of baptism. Certainly this record was conspicuous, which leads to the conclusion that perhaps the true reason for the closing of the Xavier mission has not been given.

However, it seems that no defeat whatsoever could abate the ardor of those pioneer missionaries, for at this very period when the establishments in the east were almost des-



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titute of neophytes; when the missionaries on the San Antonio were able, only by dint of exercise of all their devices to keep the Indians within the fold, there was aroused a renewed burst of enthusiasm. First the Apaches were to be converted. In 1750 Don Pedro Romero de Terreros, Conde de Regla, offered to maintain for three years at his own expense all the missions which could be established favorably from Coahuila to the north. Fray Alonzo Giraldo de Terreros of the Querétaro College was to have the work in charge. By agreement, the colleges of Querétaro and Zacatecas were each to furnish half the needed ecclesiastics.

Acting on the strength of the viceroy's approval, toward the end of 1756 an expedition was under way, reaching San Antonio de Bexar before the close of the year. Several months now were spent in projecting plans for the actual occupation. The military aide of the expedition was at last ready, and on about April 1, 1757, the march northward was begun. By the middle of the month the party had penetrated a considerable way into Apachería. On April 17 a halt was made and work begun on a presidio or fort which was called, in honor of the viceroy, San Luis de los Amarillos. A league and a half away Mission San Sabá was erected on a stream of the same name, a tributary of the Colorado.

The natives were friendly: they came and went but continued to put the friars off with promises to settle at the mission. It was soon clear to Fray Terreros that he had been mistaken in his estimate of Apache character. He saw that little was to be accomplished; nevertheless he kept earnestly at work, aided by his brother friars.

This course of procrastination of the Apaches, after having invited the Spaniards among them, gave rise to speculation concerning their real motives. Bancroft, a leading student of Southwestern history, has alleged that the Apaches openly boasted to their enemies that the Spaniards were their allies. In other words, it was in order to gain prestige

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that this treacherous tribe had resorted to false representations, inviting the Spaniards among them to Christianize them. Perhaps this is attributing too much foresight to the Apaches, let alone the palpable fact that they were quite able to take care of themselves. Whatever motive they had, which was in all probability cupidity, they were the leaders in the attack on the Spaniards and were the most conspicuous of those tribes which swarmed over the country to pillage and murder when Mission San Sabá was no more.

In any case, the establishments were not long at peace. An open show of hostilities was soon apparent. The garrison at the fort took precautions; and the viceroy ordered the governor of the province to reinforce the post of San Luis de los Amarillas. Those on the spot proposed the abandoning of the country, for provisions had run short, and crime and disease had made inroads in the population. Probably the one thing which forbade the retreat from the position in the face of the menace of the savages was the loss of prestige which Spanish arms would suffer.

The government was investigating the situation when, on March 16, 1758, Comanches, Tuacanes, Toavayases, Vídais, Gueisseis and others to the number of two thousand poured down on the mission. The Indians, armed with guns, pikes, sabers and bows and arrows, were in war paint and dressed in skins. Their yells terrified the friars who barred the doors of the mission in anticipation of an attack. The wily denizens of the woods now resorted to treachery to accomplish their purpose. They protested friendship, and the deceived fathers permitted the doors to be opened.

The bloodthirsty savages entered, and presently their real purpose was carried out. Fray-president Terreros and two other friars, Giraldo de Terreros and José de Santiesteban lost their lives along with three soldiers. Father Molina with two or three soldiers somehow escaped and that night

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succeeded in reaching the fort. The story relayed to the viceroy was to the effect that the mission with all its occupants had been destroyed, that the barbarians were supplied with firearms, that they numbered more than two thousand, and that a detachment sent by Parilla, commander of the fort, to succor the missions, had also fallen victim to the savages.

The mission was sacked in true vandal style. The images were destroyed; the holy vessels were profaned, and finally fire was invoked to complete the ruin. When this had been done the savages sought to capture the presidio. But their cunning availed them nothing. The horde of Indians, largely mounted, surged about the place uttering deafening yells, but they were obliged to content themselves with burning the outer buildings and with driving away the herds. The excitement within the fort was intense, and after the withdrawal of the enemy the soldiers were so eager to quit the country that they became almost mutinous. They feared the outcome of another attack; and indeed in June the Indians again swarmed about the presidio of Amarillas at San Sabá. But they kept out of range of the guns.

The news of the massacre spread rapidly, and in every part of the province intense activity was displayed in preparing for whatever emergency. A general assault by the Apaches was feared. An account reached Viceroy de las Amarillas while he was at San Angel; and as early as April 7 he had given orders to Governor Barrios of the province of Texas to send reinforcements to San Sabá and to San Antonio — and with all possible dispatch. Three days later the order was renewed. He sent also a message to the commander of the presidio of Amarillas saying that he would hasten forward what forces he could since the exigencies of the situation were great. Parilla, commander of the fort, sent an additional account of the situation, recommending the removal of the presidio either to the Guadalupe, the Colo-

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rado or the Almayres, an unknown stream. But first of all an army was demanded to hunt out the Indian villages — the guilty to be punished.

A ballad on the subject of the massacre was composed and sung throughout the province and North Mexico. It is full of pathos at the dastardly deed and glows with a martial spirit at the thought of revenge. There is in it a breath of the spirit of the *Cid* — it was once more war against the infidels.

In June a *junta*, or council of war, was held in the city of Mexico, and on the twenty-seventh of the same month it was decided that the fort should not be moved. The governor of Texas was ordered to meet with Captain Parilla and others to concert a plan whereby an adequate punishment might be meted out to the offending barbarians. On September 6 they reported on a plan which was sent to His Majesty with an estimate of the expense necessary to carry it to a successful termination. On March 23, 1759, a royal order came to make the campaign, but the most urgent injunctions were added concerning measures to be pursued which would eventuate in a successful enterprise. Failure was a thing to be obviated, for in such case the situation of the Spanish province would be rendered precarious.

Under these emphatic instructions an army was gathered at San Antonio de Bexar, and on August 1, under the command of Captain Parilla, it headed for the north. After marching a good many leagues, a village was surprised where fifty-five Indians were killed and one hundred and forty-nine taken prisoner. Then the march northward was continued, and before many days they were in the environs of a fortified village of the Apaches (Taovayases) from whose works floated a French flag. According to reports there were 6,000 Red Men within the village awaiting the assault. The



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Spaniards hesitated, while a rumor ran through the army to the effect that there were Frenchmen aiding the savages. The sight of the French flag probably had provoked the alarming report. The Spaniards began to take fright, and presently panic seized the whole army which broke and fled in the utmost disorder, leaving behind the quartermaster's stores and six field pieces. Thus ended an expedition which had cost 60,000 pesos and more than a year to assemble.

### III

It was as the king anticipated — the Indians now spread over the country, harrying it in every part. The Tancagues, Iacovanes and Manchegos — apostates of the San Xavier missions — allied themselves with the Apaches against the Spaniards. Bands of these Indians raided the settlements on the San Antonio, driving away much of the livestock of the communities as well as that of the missions. It was not until the following year that quiet was restored. Fray Calahora, who had been attached to the missions in the east, made his way alone into the remote fastnesses of the Apaches and there concluded a peace. He also advocated the establishment of some settlements among the northern tribes, but the agitation for the moment effected nothing.

Scarcely had the excitement subsided in San Antonio de Bexar, whither had returned the demoralized army of Captain Parilla, when the governor of the province, Angel Martos Navarrete, took up a recriminating correspondence with the French governor of Louisiana, Marquis de Kerlerec. Governor Navarrete, who had just succeeded the incompetent Barrios, openly accused the French of arming the Indians to the north and of instigating them to acts of vio-

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lence. The most was made of the fact that the Indians carried French firearms at the massacre of San Sabá, and that a French flag flew from the ramparts of their fort before which the army of Parilla had been seized with panic.

The circumstances were such as to arouse a suspicion in the minds of the authorities in Mexico concerning the relations of the French with the Apaches — and these relations were probably all the Spaniards thought them. But there were no means of checking the power which pressed from Louisiana westward, her traders not scrupling at trading arms for horses and skins.

As indicated above, the agitation for a renewed mission among the Apaches which had been advocated by Fray Calahorra, the peace delegate, failed to effect its purpose. It is, however, hardly correct to say it effected nothing; yet, so far as the Apaches were concerned, there was not another direct attempt to Christianize them. They were different from the natives with which the Franciscans had had to deal in Mexico — they were simply beyond the pale of church and civilization.

Nevertheless, this traitorous tribe, when peace had been made, began again to plead for missions. The friars — whether in reply to their solicitations or acting in response to missionary zeal, or instigated by the political breath of the government — pressed once more to the northward, and in 1761-62 founded two missions — San Lorenzo and Candelaria — in the region bordering on the domain of the Apaches. One of these was in the modern Edwards County on the Campwood Creek, but half a mile from its junction with the Nueces River. Forty leagues to the north of the one on the Campwood, in Menard County, near the site of the present Menardville, the other was located.

Of the work of these missions there is little account. Four hundred natives are reported to have settled about

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the establishments which were abandoned in 1767 by order of the viceroy. The transitoriness of it all is shown impressively in the tumbled ruins to which not even a name can of certainty be applied. All we know is that one was San Lorenzo and the other Candelaria.

While the efforts to convert the Apaches in the north were meeting with failure, a mission known as Rosario was struggling with the coast Indians. The date of its establishment was 1754, but its exact location has been the subject of dispute. However, it may be placed on the Guadalupe to the southeast of San Antonio, not many leagues from Mission Espíritu Santo.

In 1755 the Spanish Government granted to one Bernabe Carvajal a large tract of land lying in the valleys of the Guadalupe and San Antonio. In June five years later it was donated to Rosario for the use and benefit of the Jaraname and Tamiguez Indians, for whose conversion the mission seems mainly to have been established. Rosario seems for a time to have enjoyed a delusive prosperity, for in 1768 five thousand cattle were reported as belonging to the establishment, while two hundred baptisms were credited to the industry of the friars.

Notwithstanding this report, the preceding year had found the mission in bad plight. Some forty or fifty families of Indians, who had been under the tutelage of the friars, fled away and Don Alenacio Demerciera and an escort, accompanied by one of the fathers of the place, went in search of the apostates. They went also in quest of the Vidaes and the Tejas; the former were sought for conversion, the latter in order to break up a mischievous alliance with the dreaded enemy, the Apaches. The expedition, however, failed in its purpose.

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### IV

At this point we must leave Rosario to discuss the situation in the east. As noted in the preceding chapter, the three surviving missions of the Franciscans in that quarter — Dolores, Guadalupe and San Miguel — barely managed to exist. Whether for want of spiritual excitement, or whether attempting to secure those things which would aid in prolonging the life of the institutions they loved, the friars began to trade with the French in Louisiana in contravention of the law. In 1745 Joachim de Orobio Básterrea reported this to be the case, and such was still the situation when Jacinto Barrios y Jáuregui was appointed governor of Texas.

He reached the province early in 1751, having written on December 31, 1750, to Conde Revilla Gigedo, viceroy, as if already installed in office. He complained of the fact that the fort of Pilar near the Sabine had but a garrison of sixty men; he observed that he needed reinforcements since he had to detail seventeen men for the presidio of San Xavier (which was at that time enjoying a precarious existence), fifteen men to care for the horses, twenty men for the friars, and fifteen to tend the transit of messages and provisions from Saltillo.

In October, 1751, Barrios had some correspondence with the higher authorities concerning the commerce which had grown up with the French on the frontier. The governor states that Fray Miguel Ramírez, missionary at San Miguel, knew of the Frenchmen and of the trading going on. But the friar was not accused of complicity. However, at this time and henceforth, considerable interest is manifested in the illicit trade which inevitably sprang up between the Indian with his pelts and the trader with his trinkets. What is more, the friars were much nearer the French than their own source of supply, and nothing was more natural than



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that they should barter for the things of which they stood in need.

La Harpe, the French commander at the Massonite village, wrote Fray Margil of the missions, offering to divide profits with him if the friars would join him in some speculations. Governor Barrios knew how things were being carried on and made show of suppressing it; but it was only show for, indeed, he embarked on enterprises of his own, as disclosures prove. For ten years Governor Barrios conducted affairs in the province about as he wished.

**V** It was now coming on twilight in the mission movement. A luminous spot in that twilight, although not so catalogued, is the *Diary* of Fray Gaspar José de Solís for the years 1767-68. He was sent out as an inspector by the College of Zacatecas. He made a long journey from Zacatecas across Texas, account of which he faithfully recorded. It is one of the most interesting documents coming down from the Mission Period. Crossing the province to the south of San Antonio, on mule-back and with a pack train, he arrived at Rosario. The mission was in the charge of Fray Escovar. Solís said Escovar labored hard with the Indians, with "methods soft, bland and alluring. He made them work, taught them to pray, tries to teach them the catechism and to instruct them in the rudiments of our holy Faith and in good manners. He aids and succors them as best he may in all their needs, corporal and spiritual, giving them food to eat and clothing to wear. In the afternoon before evening prayers, with a stroke of the bell he assembles them and they are made to say prayers and are taught the Christian Doctrine; explains and tries to teach them the mysteries of our Holy

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Faith, exhorting them to keep the Commandments of God and of the Holy Mother Church, and setting forth what is necessary for salvation. On Saturdays he collects them and has them repeat the rosary with its mysteries and the *Alavado cantado*. On Sundays and holidays before Mass, he has them repeat the prayers and the doctrine and afterward preaches to them, explaining the doctrine and whatever else they ought to understand. If he orders punishment given to them when they need it, it is with due moderation, and not exceeding the limits of charity and paternal correction, looking only to the punishment of wrong and excess, it does not lean towards cruelty or tyranny.

"The Indians with which this mission [Rosario] was founded are the Caxanes, Guapites, Carancageraces and Copanes, but of this last nation there is at present only a few, for most of them are in the woods or on the banks of some of the many rivers in these parts; or with another nation, their friends and confederates on the shore of the sea, which is some of three or four leagues distant to the east of the mission. They are all barbarians, idle and lazy; and altogether they were so greedy and gluttonous that they eat meat almost raw, parboiled, or half roasted and dripping with blood, yet, rather than stay in the Mission, where they suffer hunger, nakedness, and other necessities, they prefer in order to be at liberty and idle in the woods or on the beach giving themselves up to all kinds of vice, especially lust, theft and dancing."

Solís named the animals in the woods—deer, cats, coyotes, turkeys, rabbits. There were hawks and screech owls. He also described the oaks, pinoaks and mesquite.

From his visit to Espíritu Santo and Rosario he went to San Antonio. He had much to say about Saint Joseph (San José). The Indians there "served" in the workshop, in the carpenter shop, the tailor shop and in the quarry; in short for all that was done in the mission. He praised the Indians

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there assembled. "Between the young and old of both sexes, there are about three hundred and fifty men advanced in years, with learning and experience. . . . All the Indian men and women are very well trained in civil customs, and Christianity. All of them know how to pray the Christian doctrine and the mysteries of our Holy Faith; all speak the Spanish language, except those who come from the forest when grown and who have remained untamed and wild, but all know how to pray and have been baptised." He affirmed that they were musical, playing harp, violin, guitar and had good voices for singing.

Solís left San Antonio for the east. He recounted having passed through regions inhabited by faithless Indians. There were many apostates who were dangerous. Extraordinary as it may seem, several times Solís referred to receiving letters from his superiors, which indicates that communications were kept up between the outlying regions.

Once he was in the east, Solís reported frankly: "The Indians of the Ayes naturally are the worst of the province; drunkards, thieves, given to *Mitotes* and dances, and to all kinds of vice, principally licentiousness. They are idle, overly audacious, shameless. . . . They look with scorn on everything connected with our Holy Faith.

"They were much given to the dances they call *mitotes*. Some of these dances are festive and happy, and others funereal and sad, being distinguished from one another by the instruments which they play for them. For the festive ones they play a tamborine [sic] that is made of a tortoise shell, or of a half gourd, or with a French pot, and a whistle of reeds and an *avocado*; for the sad ones they play certain instruments they call the *caynian*. This is very harsh and melancholy, and to the discordant notes they add sad and horrible cries, accompanied by gestures, grimaces and extraordinary contortions and movements of the body, jumping and leaping in a circle. For the *mitote* they light a fire, a big bonfire

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and dance around it, circling around the fire without ceasing day or night." He went on to relate that the women took no part in the dances, but stood aside with their hair drawn over their faces, shouting sadly. "In the dances the Indians seem like demons because of the gestures of the men."

They painted themselves red and black. They had their gods — *Pichini* or *Saint Nel* — priests they called *Conas*.

The "Indians marry" by natural contract, Fray Solís related. They traded their women, lent them to friends, sold them for a horse. "The Indian men are atrocious; the women very decent." According to Solís, the Indians were cannibals and ate their enemies. They would tie their captive to a stake and slice him to bits. Solís also declared that they were "very dirty, foul-smelling, and pestiferous, and they throw out such a bad odor from their bodies that it makes one sick."

The good friar blamed the flight of the Indians on the military. Said he: "Another reason is the neglect of the military chiefs in congregating them and gathering them together and not punishing those who run away or following them or searching for them in order to bring them back to it. If they once [return] they are not given such punishment as will serve for a check and make them afraid so that they will not run away again or desert or leave the mission."

They were boastful and strong, Solís asserted, and to show it, they went naked in the sun and cracked the ice in pools to swim in the winter.

Said Solís further, with respect to Rosario: "As to material wealth it is in good condition. It has two droves of burros; about forty gentle horses; thirty gentle mules, twelve of them with harness; 5,000 cattle; 200 milch cows, and 700 sheep and goats." He said that the buildings were "good and sufficient." The church was "decent."

The number of Indians at Rosario was large enough to consume five or six bulls per week. It was reported that Rosario had cost in four years 6,000 *pesos*. And there had



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been baptized in *articulo mortis* twelve adults and nine children. In answer to criticism for the small results, Fray Camberos said that he had not been overready to baptize the Indians. If he had been, at the end of four years the coast would have been covered with baptisms, he said. But experience had taught him that "baptisms prepared hastily made of Indians Christians who are so in name only, and who live in the woods undistinguishable from the infidels." Perhaps it was the argument of a sophist? Or was it better not to make apostates of them?

In 1768 Rosario had made 200 baptisms. But the Indians were hard to keep track of. If corporal punishment was administered, the neophytes ran away. If harsh treatment was administered by the padres, the soldiers took the part of the Indians. And in this wise, disputes and frictions arose.

Much of the data about the missions is uncertain in character. Take that about Rosario, where the figures about baptisms, etc. are in utter conflict.

Solís continued his interesting *Diary*: The Indians in the coast country were a low-grade society. Their tribal organization was primitive. They ordinarily went about in a state of nature. In extreme cold they sometimes put on skins. Being almost entirely without agricultural experience, they ate fish, eggs of gulls and other wild fowl, roots and fruit and hunted buffalo, deer and turkeys. Their habitations were of the tepee type — poles tied in a cluster covered with reeds or hides. The Carancaguades lived on the islands skirting the Texas coast and were adept in the use of the canoe. Their weapons were spear, bow and arrow. When the Spaniards first came upon them, they were supposed to be cannibals, which was in error. But their religion was non-existent.

The mission of Espíritu Santo was in better condition than Rosario, Solís reported. Espíritu Santo had large herds of burros, mules, horses, sheep and goats, two hundred yoke of oxen, and fields for corn. They raised corn, Irish and

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sweet potatoes, watermelons, cantaloupes, peaches, figs and some cotton. Espíritu Santo had been founded in 1717 by Fray Margil. Down to 1768 there had been 623 baptisms, 278 burials.

It was during this period that the last establishment, which belongs properly with the third wave of mission-founding, was dedicated in the east. On the lower Trinity, in the region known as the Orcoquisac, a tribe of Indians was located that had applied at Pilar, San Xavier and Bexar for spiritual succor. After several years they were rewarded, for Fray Calahorra of Mission Guadalupe took up their cause, securing for them a mission known as Nuestra Señora de la Luz. The date of its founding is involved in doubt, although it was probably in 1755-56, certainly before 1758. Pursuing the then stereotyped form of mission and presidio, there was erected in the vicinity a fort known as San Agustín de Ahumada. It was originally intended to serve a double purpose. Apart from the role of protector of the mission, it was to guard a colony of fifty Spanish families. The experiment of permanently colonizing the country had been proposed a number of times; and yet but one small colony had come of it — that of the Villa de San Fernando on the San Antonio River, where ten families from the Canary Islands had been located.

Perhaps the most important of the advocates for colonization was José de Escandón. He thought that the best way to pacify and missionize Nuevo Santander, the territory running from Pánuco to the San Antonio River, was to plant colonies of Mexicans in various locations and then to withdraw the garrison of soldiers. He succeeded in settling Laredo, Camargo and Reynosa, but the scheme to occupy Texas — then called by some Nuevo Santander — failed. The problem of colonization was but imperfectly understood by the Spaniards who never succeeded in a land where the aborigines failed to mix readily with their stock. The site for this new

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colony on the lower Trinity was surveyed, but thereafter no trace is found of it.

Mission Nuestra Señora de la Luz could have been but little removed from the coast. Its location on the lower Trinity could not have been expected to lend it favorable surroundings. And it appears that the mission never prospered, for in the year 1758 the padres were petitioning to abandon the site on account of an insufferable plague of flies, buffalo gnats [or possibly mosquitos]. Other reasons there were: the country was full of malaria, and the woods were alive with *Indios bravos*. The friars, who were Zacatecans, suggested another site where all the necessities for a successful mission could be obtained; this was a few miles higher up the Trinity, but we hear no more relating to the proposed change. It is clear that the mission met with but indifferent success, if Fray Anastacio Romero is to be trusted. He wrote on May 3, 1768, stating his situation. By the year 1773, if indeed it had not been abandoned at an earlier date, the friars had withdrawn, along with those of the other eastern missions. What faithful Indians there were about the establishments were transported to San Antonio de Bexar where they were assigned lands lying to the north of the Alamo, a part of the original *labor* (field) of the Alamo, but since known as the "Labor de los Adaeseños." These transfers had been made in keeping with a royal order (1773) addressed to Governor Baron de Ripperdá. The four missions of the east and the two presidios of Pilar and Agustín were ordered abandoned and the inhabitants moved to San Antonio de Bexar, to which point the guns and munitions were to be removed.

The story of the missions in the east — Dolores, San Miguel and Guadalupe — is shrouded a little in obscurity. We know something, it is true, of the events which were associated with them during the last decades of their existence. The monotony of teaching the untutored savage the *Doc-*

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*trina*, the mysteries, was broken by rumors of French plots to seize the country and by illicit trade relations which existed between the pioneers of the two powers which met on common ground along the Sabine and Red rivers. In 1758 an incident occurred — and many another such was destined to occur — which served for a time as a topic for general discussion. Some slaves from Louisiana escaped and took refuge at one of the missions where they remained until the viceroy after some correspondence ordered their return to their masters. A half-century later when the Americans had come into possession of Louisiana, the route across Texas became an alluring way for escaping slaves, some of whom found asylum in Mexico.

While the missions were comparatively feeble, Fort Pilar in 1759 mustered a strength of fifty-seven men, which was probably none too strong at the time the Indians were raiding the province, following the massacre of San Sabá and the defeat of Parilla's army which had been sent to chastise them. The boldness of the savages had been rendered more insolent and defiant because of the fact that not only the French traders, but the Spanish also, had armed them with guns. And one of the most guilty of complicity in this desperate business was the governor of the province of Texas — Barrios y Jáuregui.

As indicated above, after the disasters of 1758-59 the viceroy ordered in August, 1760, an investigation to be made into the conduct of the governor, who was specifically charged with having sold arms and munitions to the "Indios Bárbaros" to the north. As Barrios, during his term of office, lived at Pilar, which thus for several years was the capital of the province, the investigation was concluded at that place. The examination extended over months, but after many witnesses had testified, a verdict was reached (1761). The governor was declared guilty of abetting in the arming of the enemies of New Spain. The friars of the three missions



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in the east also were arraigned on charges somewhat similar to those preferred against Barrios. It was charged that they had sent hides to the French in Natchitoches (Nacotoches) and had received in return butter, shot and powder.

### VI

Almost at the time this investigation was being made in the frontier fort of Pilar, an event of infinitely wider significance was transpiring in Europe. The cession in 1762 by France to Spain of all her territories to the west of the Mississippi was a matter, the import of which cannot be truly estimated. Suffice it to say that it was an event which left its trace in hard lines on the subsequent history of the United States. To mention the Louisiana Purchase, the Texas Revolution and the Mexican War is to suggest the line of development. But at the time of the transfer, the trading fort of Natchitoches and the presidio of Pilar, mustering less than a hundred men, alone stood guard over unmeasured territories. The narrow band of English colonies along the Atlantic Ocean gave small promise of stretching westward to the Pacific Ocean. As yet but few had pushed their way across the Alleghenies—the supremacy of the English in North America was yet to be settled on the Heights of Abraham.

The acquisition of title to the whole of Louisiana could have had but one effect on the Spanish settlements along the Sabine. Their abandonment was foredoomed. No longer were the presidios of San Agustín de Ahumada on the Trinity and Pilar in the region between the Sabine and Arroyo Hondo required. There was no hostile power to face, and the missions over which they had stood guard had faded into hopeless obscurity. So in 1773 Missions Dolores, San Miguel and Guadalupe, together with the presidios, were suppressed.

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With the exception of an incident which will be taken up later, the attempt of the Spaniards to Christianize the Indians of the east had terminated dismally. Not a permanent settlement had been made — if exception be made of Nacogdoches — nor was there an ecclesiastical establishment which had had a vital, healthy growth. Apart from the enthusiasm of the Franciscans, the majority of whom were ardent apostles, a listless calm spread around the rude altars which they had erected in the Master's name. The Indian of that quarter was not made for the faith of St. Francis.

Turning now from the east, let us take up the western missions where, indeed, the only work of permanence was accomplished. The effort in this quarter was confined mainly to the San Antonio River in the vicinity of the modern city of San Antonio. Five missions were clustered within easy reach of one another. Still lower on the San Antonio River was located Espíritu Santo and not far away Rosario.

Rosario, as noted above, having been founded in the same period with San Sabá, was never successful. A malignant star seems to have risen over all the missions planted during the third wave of mission-founding. In 1780 Rosario was probably abandoned by the natives. In 1783 certainly there was not one remaining, for in July of that year the president of the missions, Fray Garza, and Fray Vasconzelos of Rosario were engaged in balancing the accounts of the missions. It was found that Rosario was indebted to Espíritu Santo for forty horses at six *pesos* each, and for wax and tobacco to the amount of 460.75 *pesos*. In the same manuscript was a list of the articles pertaining to the mission — a list reminding one of the catalogue of a museum.

From 1783 to 1790 the mission seems to have been utterly deserted. The cause was attributed to the ravages of the Lipans and Apache Indians, who stole the stock of the mission and threatened even the mission itself with the fate

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which had befallen San Sabá. The food supply failing, the tribes, originally coast people, were permitted to return to the Gulf where they could gain at least a living. In the summer of 1790, however, the site once more was occupied. Dilapidated and fallen into decay were the quarters for the neophytes; even the church was roofless, and Mass was being said temporarily in a grass-covered *jacal*. The altar ornaments and other church decorations, which had been deposited during the period of desertion with Mission Espíritu Santo, were returned promptly on request.

The friars who now undertook the work were Zacatecans; they labored with alacrity. Fray Mariano Reyes was the first on the ground, and early in 1790 he wrote that there were eighteen Indians on the old site. Telling of their extremities, physical and spiritual, he prayed for assistance, ending his appeal with the quotation: "There is more rejoicing in Heaven over one sinner that repents . . ."

But Fray Reyes — viewing the hopelessness of the situation — without waiting for assistance, gathered the Indians about him and set out for Mexico. His path may be followed with difficulty. The various stations he passed en route made mention of the fact in their reports, noting the amount of provisions which had been donated for the purposes of the friar. He arrived at Laredo, a village on the Rio Grande, on May 17, where he received a supply of food. Then he passed deep into Mexico, July 22 finding him near the town of San Francisco de Goyanguilpan. There were with him, however, but six Indians; the others had fallen by the way, straying or escaping with a view to returning to their old home.

Such efforts as this of Fray Reyes occurred at rare intervals. The chief purpose sought in such a program seems to have been the freeing of the native from the allurements of

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his own environment, so that he might be rendered more certain of adhering to the teachings of Christ and to saving his soul. Fray Reyes certainly was a true disciple of St. Francis. Whether the end sought was attained or not, it is the moving picture of a friar, with a band of infidels about him, trudging across a thousand miles of wilderness in search of salvation. The story presents aspects both picturesque and heroic.

Near Rosario, enjoying a somewhat better fortune, was Mission Espíritu Santo whose checkered course we have seen in part. Founded first on the Espíritu Santo under the protection of the presidio of La Bahía, after a term of years it was transplanted to a site on the Guadalupe. Here also failure had come in due season, and once more the mission was moved, this time to the San Antonio River where it was to become the nucleus for modern Goliad. This transfer was probably made in 1749.

The story of the mission was henceforth closely bound up with that of the missions higher up on the river; its history, in fact, varied little. It had its seasons of prosperity, its dearth of neophytes, its perils. The Indians inspired both pity and fear. For his unconverted soul the friars told *aves*; because of his heartless arrows they thanked Heaven for the protection of the mission walls. It was, indeed, from without that the menace came to the institution. The herds of cattle and horses that grazed upon the mission lands — and upon which the friars and neophytes subsisted — were exposed continuously to raids from the wild tribes — *Indios bárbaros*. The Apaches were the most notorious of these thieves, and many times did they raid the mission, driving before them what livestock they could collect. So, when a mission was left without meat, the neophyte was obliged to care for himself, and to do this he must take to the forest where were to be found fish and game.

Espíritu Santo fell under a particular ban of the Indians



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and suffered exceedingly from their depredations, despite the presence of Fort La Bahía. The inefficiency of the Spanish cavalry was shown on many occasions. There are sundry accounts of pursuits of the Red Men by the soldiers, but few of conflicts. The Indians were too expert as woodsmen for the plodding troopers to overtake. So the mission *escoltas* came to be scorned by the raiders who would slip in of a night — usually by light of the moon — round up the herds and by morning be beyond pursuit.

During the month of June, 1762, the Apaches made two raids on Espíritu Santo, slaughtering fifty cows. Captain Pedro Ramírez de las Pisecina of the Presidio de La Bahía complained to the governor of the province that if the Apaches were not subdued, the mission would be left utterly destitute. The incursions and insolence of the Indians were beyond endurance. He explained that they were numerous and that his force was small.

Notwithstanding the thefts perpetrated by the Indians, there grew up about the mission a large number of cattle, many of which, scattered by raids, with their offspring became *mesteños* (wild or unmarked). It was claimed by some that these were common property. Fray José de Escobar of Espíritu Santo, however, sold three hundred and forty-eight of them for the sum of 957 *pesos*, which sale provoked controversy, the principal participants being the friar and the governor. The position of the friar was that the increase had come from the cattle of the mission and that, therefore, the unmarked ones belonged to his charge.

But there were other battles to be fought by the missionaries. It was only by constant effort that supplies were obtained, and it was only by conscientious devotion to duty that the neophytes were constrained to remain within the mission enclosures. Indeed, the latter virtue often failed. Vigilance was employed to little purpose. In spite of the pleas of the fathers and in spite of the threats of the guards,

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under cover of night the neophytes would steal away, never to return. Accordingly, force was used occasionally in the endeavor to recapture the runaways. So late as February 23, 1784, there fled in the night from Espíritu Santo twenty-one Xaranames. A force of fifteen men set out the following day from La Bahía to bring them back. But the Indians succeeded in eluding their pursuers.

Leaving the Espíritu Santo for the time being, we shall take up the history of the five missions grouped on the upper San Antonio River under the protection of the Presidio San Antonio de Bexar. The treatment of these will be facilitated by taking them up in the following order: Alamo, San José, Concepción, San Juan and Espada.

Despite the fact that it is a departure from the scheme of treating the missions by the more or less distinct waves or periods of founding, the group of missions here named has been reserved for special reasons. Chief among these is the continuity of existence which they afford; and secondly, because of the fact that in the matter of achievement, they hold the first place.

As mentioned above, Martín de Alarcón, upon entering the province early in 1718 bearing succor to the missions in the east, established on the San Antonio River a mission called San Antonio de Valero, in honor of the viceroy. San Antonio de Valero, or Alamo, as it came to be known, probably had enjoyed an earlier existence in the region bordering the Rio Grande; but for us it begins with May 1, 1718 — the day of its consecration on the San Antonio River. The buildings here, as in most cases, were of wood and rudely constructed; but on May 4, 1744, the foundation of the stone church was laid. It will be understood that the church was but part of the mission proper. The church building was situated on one side of the plaza, the walls of which enclosure were eight or ten feet high by three thick. The plaza was designed to hold cattle and provisions and was

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expected to protect the mission from the assaults of the savages. It is to be noted that the works were planned on no small scale. But we shall have occasion further to explain the defenses and buildings of this set of missions. When the Alamo was planted on the beautiful river known as San Antonio, Fray Antonio Olivares had brought with him a few neophytes from the abandoned Mission Solano on the Rio Grande. From outside sources the neophytes increased, and their energies were employed in constructing the church, convent, *plaza de armas*, in clearing the fields and in digging the *acequia* for irrigation purposes — an *acequia*, which until quite recent times continued to run past the old church. But the field (*labor*) of the Alamo which lay between the ditch and the river is no longer traceable, being engulfed by the modern municipality of San Antonio. The Indians worked the land in common, and the produce was harvested and stored in a common granary.

But the way of the mission was difficult; the enmity of the "Indios infieles" rendered the situation much worse. In 1762 Fray Mariano Francisco de los Dolores, stationed at the Alamo, wrote the governor of the losses the mission had sustained. He was so disheartened that he declared that if a deadly war was not waged against the barbarians, the mission must cease to exist. This date will be recalled in connection with the massacre of San Sabá and the raids of the Apaches.

In an earlier chapter it was recalled that the Spaniards in 1719 found it expedient to retreat from the east — upon the approach of the French. While they tarried at San Antonio de Bexar, a mission called San José y Miguel de Aguayo was established. When the friars once more repaired to the east, the mission they had dedicated in 1720 survived. It was situated about three leagues below the Alamo and on the opposite side of the river. The photogravure will give but a hint of the beauty of the mission-church. It was

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by far the greatest effort of the Franciscans in Texas. The buildings were several years in the course of erection. Pedro Huisa (Huizar), a noted sculptor, executed the lovely carvings — which in any age would have acclaimed Huisa distinguished. He spent years on the work. The desecrated facade, together with a superb window, still attest his master handicraft.

The church building was within the walls of the plaza. The walls of this mission were not unlike those of the Alamo. Built in the walls and extending almost all around were the houses occupied by the neophytes. In the rear of the church proper was a series of cloisters and cells: in the former the friars and the celibates made penance with fasting and flagellation; in the latter the Red Men were punished for crimes. The ruins of the extensive granary mark clearly the scale on which the mission was built; but more clearly do the overgrown fields with the half-filled *acequias* testify to the patience and industry of the founder of San José. As these lines are set down, however, the Villa of San Antonio has flooded out and around, until once more the mission is isolated from the world.

San José always was recognized as the head of the San Antonio missions, for the friar in charge of it was in nearly every instance president of the Zacatecan missions of the province. San José was regarded as the most successful of the missionary enterprises, boasting the largest number of neophytes and baptisms and easily leading in point of cattle and corn. But, as in every case, its success was more specious than real and not without its days of trouble. From time to time the neophytes with whom the friars had labored would slip away from the church or escape from the toil of the fields; and the ever-persisting Apaches would raid the region, driving away the cattle. So serious were these depredations that Fray Pedro Ramírez complained in 1762 that the cattle had been reduced from 4,300 head to 400, and that because



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of this curtailment of supply for the service of the mission, they killed now but two head per week, whereas formerly they killed six. The converts were reduced accordingly to suffering and needed relief.

It will be recalled that in 1731 the Missions San José, Concepción and San Francisco de los Tejas were removed from the east to the San Antonio, the first assuming the name of San Juan Capistrano, the second retaining the name of Concepción, the last — which had indeed been the first in the province — assuming the distinguishing name of San Francisco de la Espada.

Of these, Concepción was the more important. Of the three it was nearest the Alamo and the city proper. The church building and the outlying structures rank next to those of San José in completeness. Of these the granary and church remain, the latter in a fairly good state of preservation, where Mass is said at stated intervals.

Concerning the missions of San Juan and San Francisco de la Espada, but a word is wanted here. What we know of them is meager enough and chiefly in the form of tabulated reports, giving scarcely more than the number of neophytes present within the walls at given dates. The buildings erected were inferior to those of Concepción and San José. The outlying walls and houses for Indians were long ago decayed, and the old rectangular stone churches, the eastern walls of which were carried higher than the others with arches for the reception of bells, are tumbled into ruins. The results of their sixty years of labor are tabulated in the following chapter.

As stated before, there were some matters which affected alike the San Antonio missions. The Indian raids have been noted, but the conflict with the growing Villa of San Fernando which sprang up around the presidio of San Antonio de Bexar, has need of a few words. This is interesting, not

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only because of the fact that San Fernando was the nucleus of the modern city of San Antonio, but also as illustrating the way of things mundane. Perhaps it is not true that the growth of the village was instrumental in the undoing of the missionary system, as some of the friars alleged; but it is true that the villagers left nothing undone to aggravate the friars, fostering discontent among the inhabitants of the missions, sheltering apostates, stealing away the neophytes. Such were the indictments of the padres. On the other side, petition after petition was sent by the villagers to Mexico, each bearing its burden of charges against the friars. An extreme example of this is to be seen in a dispatch forwarded the viceroy under date of August 26, 1756. It was avowed that the missionaries were usurping the whole country and restricting the growth of the villa; that there were not enough Indians in the five missions for one.

Nor was the subject of land-distribution the only one which aroused bickerings and recriminations. Some of the villagers acquired stock which ran in herds on the open range. They mingled naturally with the herds of the missions, for fences — barring those which enclosed the fields — were unknown. That was well, but when the time came for dividing the increase and the wild stock, there arose serious and continuous strife. Finally, in 1787 an agreement was entered into by the missionaries on the one hand and the villagers on the other, which defined the respective rights of the parties. In the matter of the distribution of stock, the villa seems to have gotten the better of the deal. The spokesman for the missions was Fray José Francisco López, who had in his care the Alamo.

To pass from this contest between the village and the missions which continued for most of the century — indeed, until the friars were withdrawn from the province — let us note some of the regulations which applied to the religious

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establishments. The neophytes, for instance, were subject to military duty. After the massacre of San Sabá — when the expedition under Parilla was being marshalled at San Antonio de Bexar with the avowed object of retaliatory war against the Apaches — the missions on the San Antonio were ordered to send thirty-five Indians to join his army. They were to be enlisted for three months and were destined for the “Islas Blancas,” as the unknown *Apachería* was designated. But to this order the friars immediately replied that they had not the available strength to spare. It is believed that the detachment from the missions was not sent, for in 1766, in accounting for Parilla’s failure, Governor Martos y Navarrete says it was to be attributed largely to a lack of Indian allies.

The daily routine required of the Indians who gathered at the missions is a subject which can only be approached. But fascinating to an extraordinary degree are the pages which tell of his early rising to attend the matins, the Mass; of his mornings in the field or in the quarry; of the time spent in lifting into place the stones which were making for him a home or a sanctuary; of the slow hours devoted to the memorizing and reciting of *aves*; and of the benedictions and vespers! What wonder that the Red Man of the near Stone Age chaffed, rebelled and fled. Much better fitted was he to make an arrow than hew a stone, to bless the rising sun and to find his sanctuary in the deep woods where he could tell his tales of prowess rather than to sing the Songs of David!

## The Drawing of the Curtain

It is a fact worthy of mention that a century and two years after the founding of the first mission in the province of Tejas, the last — Refugio — was planted. Fray José Mariano Garza was appointed by the governor of the province to mark the site for the new establishment; and in the spring of 1792 he set about his task. He encountered a goodly number of Indians who demonstrated in various ways their eagerness for a mission. After some difficulty a site was chosen and a report rendered the governor. The location was between Mission Espíritu Santo and the coast, not far from the modern town of Refugio. At the mission, for its protection, was stationed a guard of ten men under the command of Prudencio Rodríguez.

During the summer Fray José M. Roxo went among the Indians to teach them and to invite them to come to the



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new church which was about to be erected. Partly as a result of his efforts and partly responding to native instincts, in August a large number of Red Men assembled. But work on the buildings had been delayed. So late as November Fray Garza was pleading with Governor Muñoz for aid in the erection of the church. Between this date and January, 1793, the building was completed, for in the latter month Padre Garza complained to the governor of the non-arrival of the ornaments. There had been received, however, images of Nuestra Señora del Refugio and Santo Hipolito. Work on the other buildings was continued, but cold weather and rains delayed matters so that summer was well advanced before the mission establishment was completed. The whole cost was estimated at 6,670 *pesos*; of which the church absorbed 1,000 *pesos*; the ornaments, 652; supplies for the Indians for the first year 1,652; lodgings, agricultural implements, the remainder.

Mariano Rodríguez has left us a diary of no little interest. In it he says that so late as May 1, 1793, work was not completed. The outer walls, differing from those of the missions on the San Antonio, were of poles cut from the woods; the buildings likewise were constructed of logs and thatched with tule. An effort was made the same year to raise a crop; and to this end the missions on the San Antonio lent Refugio both oxen and mules. Moreover, four *fanegas* of corn per week were donated, while cattle were to be supplied at the trifling price of 1.25 *pesos* per head.

Meantime the other missions in the province — seven in number, the five grouped on the San Antonio together with Espíritu Santo and Rosario — had reached a critical stage. Practically abandoned by the Indians, with neither hands to till the fields nor to tend the herds, with the whole mission fabric breaking down about them, the friars could do nothing less than ask to be relieved of their charges. It was a situation full of drama, stirring with pathos and

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tragedy — not of a day's unfolding, but of centuries.

In 1792, while the axes were busy cutting the logs for Refugio, it was proposed by the friars themselves to secularize the Alamo and to combine the other four missions in that quarter, making of them two. This plan would have freed three friars who were to have gone to Colorado to work among the natives. The Alamo had at this date but seven Indians, of whom four were Christians, three "gentiles." Another clause in the plan was that these should be transferred to San José.

The scheme was acted upon favorably, and the succeeding year the Alamo was given up to the secular authorities — or, in the technical phrase, was secularized. That meant that the temporalities of the mission were placed in the hands of the civil officials, who, following the secularization orders, divided among the neophytes of the mission certain articles and implements, apportioning to them tracts of land sufficient to sustain them.

In 1785 the church property was valued at 28,000 *pesos*. When this secularization program had been carried out, there remained to the Alamo certain properties which were in part distributed among the missions. For instance, the newly-established Refugio received one hundred and twelve head of stock; and much later (1805) Fray José María de Puelles at Nacogdoches returned ornaments, priests' robes, etc., which the Alamo had lent them.

Now that we have traced, in a way, the fortunes of the Alamo, it may be instructive to note that, from the date of its foundation to 1762, there had been 1,972 baptisms. At that time the mission had a population of 275; and there were 1,200 cattle, 300 horses and 1300 sheep. In 1770 the population had fallen to 40; but 13 years later the total had risen to 143, while the following year, 1784, the number aggregated but 147. From that date, however, the decline was unbroken, save in 1789 when the number — augmented by

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the return of some of the Indians from the east, of whom we shall hear something more — approximated 121. The following year the number dropped to 48; and for 1792, to 36.

As narrated in a preceding chapter, when Missions Concepción, San José and San Francisco de los Tejas were transferred to the San Antonio, certain tribes of Indians accompanied them. The natives were distributed among the missions and assigned lands, the fields of the Alamo being known henceforward as the "labor de los Adaeseños" in honor of the Adaes.

Some of these settlers, however, were displeased with the new country and returned east, forming a settlement known as Bucareli, low down on the Trinity River. There a leader was developed, Antonio Gil y Barbo, who induced them to remove to near the site of the old mission of Guadalupe. The old stone fort still standing in the city of Nacogdoches (probably) dates from this period. Prosperous, however, as the settlement appeared to be in 1792, when the Alamo was in the throes of dissolution, 45 of the Adaes tribe presented themselves at its doors and were assigned lands in the labor de los Adaeseños. Around the Alamo there had grown up a village which, in 1792, numbered 103 persons. Among these were 36 Indians, 15 Spaniards, 19 Negroes. In 1804 there were 122 inhabitants; and 4 years later, 193.

The village which sprang up about Mission Guadalupe continued to grow, eventually becoming the city of Nacogdoches, and in 1796 a census reported two friars — Bernadino Bollero and Pedro Portugal — as engaged at that frontier post. The development of the village of Nacogdoches was slow. But with the Louisiana Purchase and the dispute with the United States over the eastern boundary of the province of Texas, it became the headquarters of Spain in that region.

It was captured by Magee and Gutiérrez in 1812 at the outset of their famous filibustering expedition and never

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again became wholly Spanish. The Indians who inhabited the place, according to Spanish authorities, fled at the approach of the Anglo-Americans, taking with them the images and ornaments of the church. With this episode the chapter of the occupation of the east by the friars drew to a close.

Returning to the San Antonio, as was suggested in the first proposal for the secularization of the Alamo, the other missions were to be subjected to a change, a consolidation. That part of the program, however, was not carried out. One by one the remaining missions met the fate of the Alamo.

On April 10, 1794, San José y Miguel de Aguayo — San José of the beautiful facade — was secularized. It had been founded in 1719 by the Spaniards who retreated from the east before the invasion of the French from Louisiana. Some of the houses in the outer wall of the mission plaza were given to faithful Indians and Creoles, while some of them were rented, the sums thus accruing going to swell the secular fund. The secularization act went into great detail concerning the disposal of property and the matter of renting the remainder. The plot assigned each individual was described accurately; while for the rented tracts, the most carefully-worded contracts were drawn. Even the amount of water to be taken from the irrigating ditch was stipulated carefully. For example, Felipe Castillas was to have one *dula* of water which, with his land, was to cost him a rental of five *pesos* per annum.

Our knowledge of the strength of San José at various times may be briefly catalogued. While the mission was long regarded the most prosperous mission in the Texas field, the figures tell a characteristic story. In 1770 the population was given at 100; in 1783 at 129; in 1784 at 209; in 1790 at 104; in 1794 at 78; in 1799 at 55.

Up to 1763 there had been 1,054 baptisms; and in that year there were 350 Indians present in the mission. At one time the mission owned 1,000 yoke of oxen, and its property



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was valued at 40,000 *pesos*. But the tendency exhibited in the figures given above was downward; and the number of neophytes connected with the mission never again reached the figures of 1762. However, so late as 1814, there were 49 Indians, 51 Spaniards and others at the church, attended by a priest. Even so late as 1823 there was a friar teaching at San José — José Antonio Díaz de León. There are two letters from him about inconsequential matters — of dates January 28 and August 5, 1822.

By the same order for the secularization of San José issued by Governor Pedro de Nava, colonel in the king's armies, political and military governor of the province of Texas — Concepción, San Juan and Espada were transferred from the hands of the friars. The scheme followed was the same as heretofore described and need not be repeated. We have here but to tabulate the story of each of these.

Concepción ranked next to San José in importance. But it exhibits no phase of particular interest. By the year 1762 there had been 792 baptisms, and the Indians resident there at that date numbered 207. The mission owned 600 cattle, 300 horses and 2,200 sheep. A few years later the mission property was valued at 35,000 *pesos*. At the date of the secularization, July 31, 1794, there were at the mission 38 persons — 16 men, 15 women, 1 boy and 6 girls. The lands assigned these several families were marked off by Don Pedro Huizar, son of the celebrated Huizar who had ornamented San José. Fray José María Gomarena was at the head of the mission at the time.

San Juan, which was but a short distance below Concepción on the river, had up to 1762, 847 baptisms and at that date boasted 203 neophytes. There also belonged to the mission 1,000 cattle, 500 horses and 3,500 sheep. The church, however, was but half finished and was valued at only 4,500 *pesos*. The building was finished in the course of time, but

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the neophytes diminished, while the herds during the disastrous years following the massacre of San Sabá were depleted by the Apaches. From 203 neophytes in 1762, the number had fallen eight years later to 35, and although it rose again in 1785 to 112, the tendency was downward. Two years after the secularization there were in the mission 34 Indians; while in 1814 there were reported at the mission 27, and 72 settlers.

The neighboring mission Espada, which had first been planted in 1690 in the east among the Tejas, passed also under the secularization order. It never had been successful for, during the 31 years following its establishment on the San Antonio, it had but 85 baptisms. However, the population in 1762 was 207, and there were 1,200 cattle and 4,000 sheep. The church was valued at 4,000 *pesos*. In 1786 there were said to be 144 Indians at the mission; two years later there were but 46. The year before it was secularized there were reported to be 46 neophytes. But the real Mission Period closed in 1794.

The secularization of the San Antonio missions left but three other establishments of similar character in the province — Rosario, Espíritu Santo and Refugio.

Rosario, it will be recalled, was established in 1754, being one of those founded during the third wave which swept over the country. Located in the vicinity of Espíritu Santo, its history was connected closely with that outlying mission. Its story was pretty much a succession of chapters of failure. It became so feeble that it was abandoned from 1783 to 1790. Early the following year Fray Francisco López wrote that if the missions would come to the aid of Rosario, there would be no difficulty in its being re-established. He stated that Espíritu Santo had agreed to furnish the beef till the herds were increased sufficiently to support the neophytes. The Alamo promised to give 25 *fanegas* of corn; San José, 25;

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Concepción, San Juan and Espada, 10 each. This the padre thought sufficient to sustain the Indians until a crop could be raised. The letter was addressed to Governor Muñoz, who replied that the mission also would be supplied with funds with which horses, etc. could be purchased. He suggested that some faithful fray should go to the coast and induce the Cojanes to return to their allegiance. In January, 1791, fifteen Indians were at the mission, and there had been spent 269.50 *pesos* for clothing for them. (Among the items were 33 *varas* of cloth at two *pesos* per *vara*, and a gross of buttons at 9.25 *pesos*.)

During the course of the year repairs were made on the church, Fray Jandenes reporting in August that the work was progressing favorably. They were short, however, of money wherewith to pay laborers. He stated that there were then 85 Indians at the missions. On October 13 the new church was solemnly dedicated. Eight days later Fray Jandenes rendered an account of the cost of rehabilitating the mission, the whole amount being 2,354.75 *pesos*.

But the mission did not prosper, and on July 1, 1797, Governor Pedro de Nava announced that if the Cocos and Carancajuaces, recently settled at Rosario, so desired, they might go over to Chihuahua where they would be assigned irrigable land and supported till a crop was harvested. The winter of 1797 proved a hard one; the food supply was exhausted, and in his extremity Fray Antonio de Jesus Garabito permitted the Cojanes and Carancajuaces to retire to the coast.

The mission lived on with varying fortunes till about 1809. In that year Juan José Hernandez applied to the governor for two *sitios* of the land belonging to Rosario, and it was granted, showing that it was extinct.

The history of Mission Espíritu Santo is checkered enough. Located originally near the site of La Salle's old fort of St. Louis, it was moved to the Guadalupe where it

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fared little better, the Indians in the end abandoning it altogether. A third move placed it on the San Antonio River where its fortunes have been followed. By 1762 the mission was credited with 623 baptisms and was supposed to have had at that time 300 neophytes, 1,500 cattle and 100 horses. Its church property was valued at 12,000 *pesos*.

The year 1790 was one of drought — no corn was raised and the pastures were bare. The friars in charge of the work were distressed, and the outlook was in truth most disconcerting. Governor Muñoz was appealed to for assistance so that the Indians would not be compelled by stress of necessity to abandon the mission. But the aid asked was not received. With an empty granary, with but poor and dying cattle to supply their wants, the Indians once more disappeared to win a living from the chase and the forest. Most of them went to the coast, for in the fall of 1791 Fray José Mariano Garza was dispatched thither to gather them together and to lead them once more to the fold of the mission.

But he was unsuccessful. Some Xaranames, however, put in an appearance, and we find a list of presents distributed among them. These acts had the approval of Viceroy Revilla Gigedo who, however, in the midst of abetting the missions did not lose sight of the military situation of the country, for already the rumbling of the terrible wars of the French Revolution were plainly heard in the New World. Not only that, there was the threat of the *Anglo-Americano*, the new *barbarian* pushing down from the north. The viceroy requested that maps be made of the country for service in case of future military operations.

In 1792 the *Indios bravos* once more harried the settlements. The leaders in these raids were the Lipans (Apaches), and the Espíritu Santo was subjected to especial hardships. But the fact which deserves most to be brought out in this



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connection is that the neophytes of the above mission joined those of Rosario and some Indians from the coast to repel the raiders. The united party marched in search of the marauders, but the latter had raised camp, hurrying northward. It is clear, therefore, that the Indians of the missions were armed in their own defense; for the neophytes were of the weaker tribes, and once to have aroused the enmity of the Lipans and Apaches meant that the weaker had but the alternative of extermination or permanent residence in the mission. And this in a measure held true, for not one of the mission tribes survived to the middle of the nineteenth century.

A controversy arose in 1793 between the newly-founded mission of Refugio and Espíritu Santo. The cause of the trouble was the taking of some cattle which belonged to the Espíritu Santo by the *escoltas* of the former. The guard for Refugio alleged that they thought it their duty to supply food to Refugio and that they took the first cattle they came across. The governor of the province put an end to the controversy.

In 1783 Espíritu Santo had 214 neophytes; in 1785, but 118; in 1788, but 83; in 1791 there were 129.

In 1795 there was a flurry of excitement occasioned by the absconding of Lieutenant Manuel Espadas of the presidio of La Bahía. He took with him the funds of the fort, and two years later this subject was being discussed. We find also an interesting diary for this year. The various happenings at the presidio were chronicled faithfully, giving one a clear insight into the life of such a post as La Bahía which was maintained as a guard against encroachments of whatever character.

We learn from the diary that there were ninety-three soldiers and officers in garrison; that much time was devoted to drilling, guard-mounting and the routine of soldiers' duties. There were also such entries as: "November 1. The

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Lipan chief Canoso came with twenty-five *gandulas* (being Indians), ten women and eight boys and camped near by. November 2. The same party left for their *rancheria* (village). November 3. Seven Tejas Indians went away."

From this narrative we may infer that peace had been made with the Lipans, and that some of the Tejas Indians had been connected with the missions. Furthermore, it is clear that life in La Bahía was not so deadly monotonous as one might have thought. The coming and going of the Red Men, the seasons of plenty and of dearth, the truces and struggles, the flights of neophytes, the pursuit, the daily routine of matins and vespers — all tended to alert one; and was there not, over and above it all, the glamor and color of the wilderness and the sharp wild air of a day that is dead forever?

In the summer of 1806 the Indians fell upon the mission and killed the *corporal* of the herds. Governor Antonio Cordero — whose soldiers were at the moment gathering at Nacogdoches to contest with the Americans the possession of the region lying between the Arroyo Hondo and the Sabine, took a moment out to order that the savages be pursued and chastised. But pursuit and chastisement by Spanish soldiers ended almost invariably in failure.

A few years later when Magee and Gutiérrez led their filibustering army from the Neutral Ground into Texas, capturing Nacogdoches, driving the royalists before them and capturing Goliad, the Indians fled away from the mission. In 1814 Espíritu Santo was deserted. The neophytes who had been connected with the place were on the Brazos River, looking for spiritual succor but stubbornly refusing to return to the mission. At such a juncture the friars returned to their college at Querétaro. This is one of the latest direct statements found which concerns the Franciscans and their efforts to Christianize the lands beyond the Rio Grande,

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the land of the Tejas. Years after (1833) — when already the Anglo-Americans had crossed the deadline so long defended by the forces of Spain, when Stephen F. Austin and those fearless frontiersmen already were planted in the domain which had seen a century of Spanish endeavor — forty Indians were found settled around the site of the old mission of Espíritu Santo. The land having been declared common by the town of Goliad, they were ready to take up arms to defend it. It seems that they were the Indians who appealed from the Brazos for the friars to come among them, refusing to return to Espíritu Santo. At length, however, they had returned, claiming lands, some of which they were entitled to by the terms of the secularization order.

Sentiment, one may say, but it is touching to think of those wayward, simple children returning to a home where they had dwelt with brown-gowned men who had attempted to teach them something of Divine Law according to the light they had received, to a home where their ancestors had dwelt long before a Paleface had drifted to those alien shores. It is pitiful to think of them dropping one by one by the way until not one remained as a connecting link between the past and the present.

The time came when but a single mission existed in all the province — Refugio. And the year that witnessed the transfer of the San Antonio mission found Refugio complaining of the encroachments of neighbors upon the lands of the mission. These neighbors, moreover, were scattering the cattle so that several days were required to find one to kill for rations. As a consequence, the Indians were clamoring for provisions, and Governor Muñoz was asked to send assistance; this came in due season by the secularization of the other missions, for it will be recalled that certain gifts were made to Refugio. Among other things, in April, 1795, Governor Muñoz dispatched to the mission 227 bulls which were

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calculated to support the mission for a year.

For two years more we hear nothing of Refugio; but in February, 1798, Fray Silva wrote that the mission had been the victim of the depredations of one Chepillo, an apostate of Rosario. He was the leader of the Cojanes and Guapites, who were guilty also of killing Sergeant Pacheco. They were so strong that a guard sent out to punish them was compelled to retreat.

Indian troubles multiplied, and in June there was dispatched from the Presidio de La Bahía a force of twenty men to look after some Tehuacanes who had stolen horses from Refugio. A little later a band of 180 Comanches encamped near Refugio and took away twenty-one horses and some cattle. The raids were continued from time to time and the mission was helpless, for the Spanish troops at La Bahía offered no defense. Refugio had other troubles, too, for the soldiers were insolent and took upon themselves to occupy more than a third of all the houses, leaving nothing for the neophytes.

It is in connection with Refugio that we have an interesting account of the course pursued with newly-reduced Indians. They were given lessons daily in the Christian religion, later on Sunday only. But the routine at Refugio frequently was interrupted by the absence of the Red Men. But the hostility of the Comanches and the revolutionary situation of 1813 drove the Indians to the lagoons on the coast, whence they returned only for supplies and for spiritual blessings, as Fray Bernardino said. There were cattle at the mission but no horses to ride after them because of the robberies of the barbarous tribes.

By the year 1825 there had been 150 converts at Refugio — as Humboldt would say, 150 who had become expert enough to make the sign of the Cross. The Indians, as Fray José Antonio Díaz de León sadly confessed, were little attached to their religion. They lived in the woods and sub-



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sisted by hunting, since the Comanches had stolen the cattle. Fray Miguel Muro went among the natives who had formerly lived at the mission, pleading with them to return, but without avail. Finally, however, eight or ten families of Cocos and Carancajuaces came in, only to return shortly to their native haunts.

In February, 1830, there was rendered to the Alcalde of Goliad by Don Miguel Atorete, a report or inventory of Refugio, similar to those returned by San José and other missions at the time of their secularization. The report was exhaustive, giving everything pertaining to the establishment. The one thing worth noting, however, is that twelve Indians presented themselves and were assigned lands. And thus the last mission in the province of Texas became extinct.

II                    One hundred and forty years had passed since De León and Massanet founded, near the Neches River, Mission San Francisco de los Tejas. Stupendous changes had taken place in European and American history. The Continent had felt the overwhelming impact of the French Revolution, while in America the English colonies — which in 1690, when the Spaniards were searching the province of Texas for La Salle, were but a string along the Atlantic — had grown into a state, overthrowing the sovereignty of Great Britain. And, too, the Spanish colonies in the New World had grown restive under the spell of American and French revolutionary teaching and in the first quarter of the nineteenth century cast off the yoke of the mother country. In this great

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struggle for the emancipation of mankind Texas bore a part, witnessing in 1813 the triumph of Magee and Gutierrez and the massacre of the Medina. A score of years later another phase of the struggle turned on the tragedy of the Alamo and the victory of San Jacinto.

It is well worth observing, however, that prior to the American Revolution of 1776, almost before an English explorer had crossed the Alleghenies, the region since known as Texas was completely Spanish. Its possession no longer was contested; and when in 1763 Louisiana was ceded by France to Spain, the vast stretch of land from Florida around the Gulf of Mexico and on to Tierra del Fuego and from Tierra del Fuego to Oregon was claimed by the Catholic Church.

The means employed by Spain to hold her immense possessions were in a sense twofold — religious and political. The friar went everywhere as handmaid to the political officer who was soldier and administrator, judge and dictator. Throughout the boundless domain of Spain a crude form of colonial government was set in motion. In no case was success achieved save where the commercial and social relations of the natives were blended with the religious and political. The effort in Texas failed chiefly for want of these elements in right proportion. An additional cause for failure, however, is to be found in the nature of the Indians. They had not attained to that state of development which the Mexicans and Peruvians boasted, nor had they the qualities of mind or body which rendered them assimilable. The net result was that after 140 years of Spanish occupation, there were but four settlements in Texas which remained to bind the Spanish occupation to the present. These settlements were Nacogdoches, Goliad, Refugio and San Antonio; and they were but feeble villages when the Anglo-American pushed his way into the province with the opening of the nineteenth century.



## CHAPTER SIX

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### Observations

It has been the purpose of this study to deal with the work of the Franciscans in the Mission Period of Texas history, and to subordinate the political. It has not been possible, however, wholly to ignore the political, for too often it is interwoven with the operations of the friars.

The truth is that in a sense the political completely dominated the scene. Indeed, throughout the 2,000 years of Western history political rulers have used the machinery of the Church to carry out their work, be the character of that work benevolent or destructive.

The role that held Europe for so many centuries was brought over to the New World and there again was fully employed. Fortunately for Texas there was no Aztec, no Inca civilization to destroy. There was only the nomadic Indian to be brought to Christ through the sublime dedication of the Franciscans. Incidentally, the planting of mis-



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sions held the country for Spain. Thus again the Church worked in the interest of the State.

We cannot pass on without reminding the reader of the fact that the underlying Force of the Franciscans was found in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, and he had found the germ of it far back. That Force remains alive even though at times it seems lost in the trappings of civilizations, twenty-six (or more) of which have come and gone. And yet here and there the glow of that eternal fire can be seen.

Perhaps as the end of this narrative draws near, a bare summation of the achievements of the Franciscans is warranted. First of all, the total of Indians baptised approximated 10,000; the neophytes at the high point numbered but 2,000. In the way of things material, the churches of Concepción, San José and the Alamo still stand as monuments of the departed power of the Franciscans; but they are monuments erected in large part by moneys out of the royal treasury of Spain. Altamira, the historian, wrote in 1744 that the royal treasury had spent on the missions and presidios the sum of 3,000,000 *pesos*, and that they had cost annually 73,000 *pesos*. The missions had never been self-sustaining, nor were they supposed to be.

The inherent principle of the religious regime — which for more than a century animated the Franciscans in Texas — had in it something of the Divine Fire, else it could not have withstood the beatings and abuse of men. That it survived is evidence of its eternal character. Perhaps it may be alleged that the efforts of the friars to Christianize the natives of Texas were not psychologically sound. But judgments must be rendered as of the time. The seventeenth century thinking was one thing — twentieth century thinking quite another. Perhaps it has been said — or will be said — that the savage whose life was a round of rude and barbaric pleasures was not ready for the transition from wilderness to plowshare and vespers. The change was too great. The

transformation of a savage into a thinking man is not the work of a generation but of centuries — and in the process he often destroys himself.

In closing this study it is pleasant to turn from the fragmentary story of the labors of the Franciscans to the friars themselves. Disappointing and melancholy as events often must have appeared to them, they went forward with stout hearts, with a sole purpose — the winning of souls. Their shortcomings, if any, were of their age — an age which had its role to play in the evolution of Western civilization. And who is to evaluate that role in the deep and stupendous drama of man's life on earth! Certainly they carried out the letter of Christ's command: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

It is not surprising that these Franciscans, servants of God, were caught up in the mystical storm of the time. There was no escaping it. They were true Crusaders and suffered evils and perils of many sorts, the while struggling to bring the *infieles* to the Sacred Font. The Crusaders who gave their lives in an effort to redeem the Tomb of Christ from the infidels were no more heroic than were the bare-foot friars in their brown robes who trudged through the night and the wilderness of Tejas to reclaim the Indian out of his barbaric state.

The Franciscans are gone, but the culture and philosophy which they implanted have survived and are a force in the lives of many who dwell in the land of the Tejas.



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